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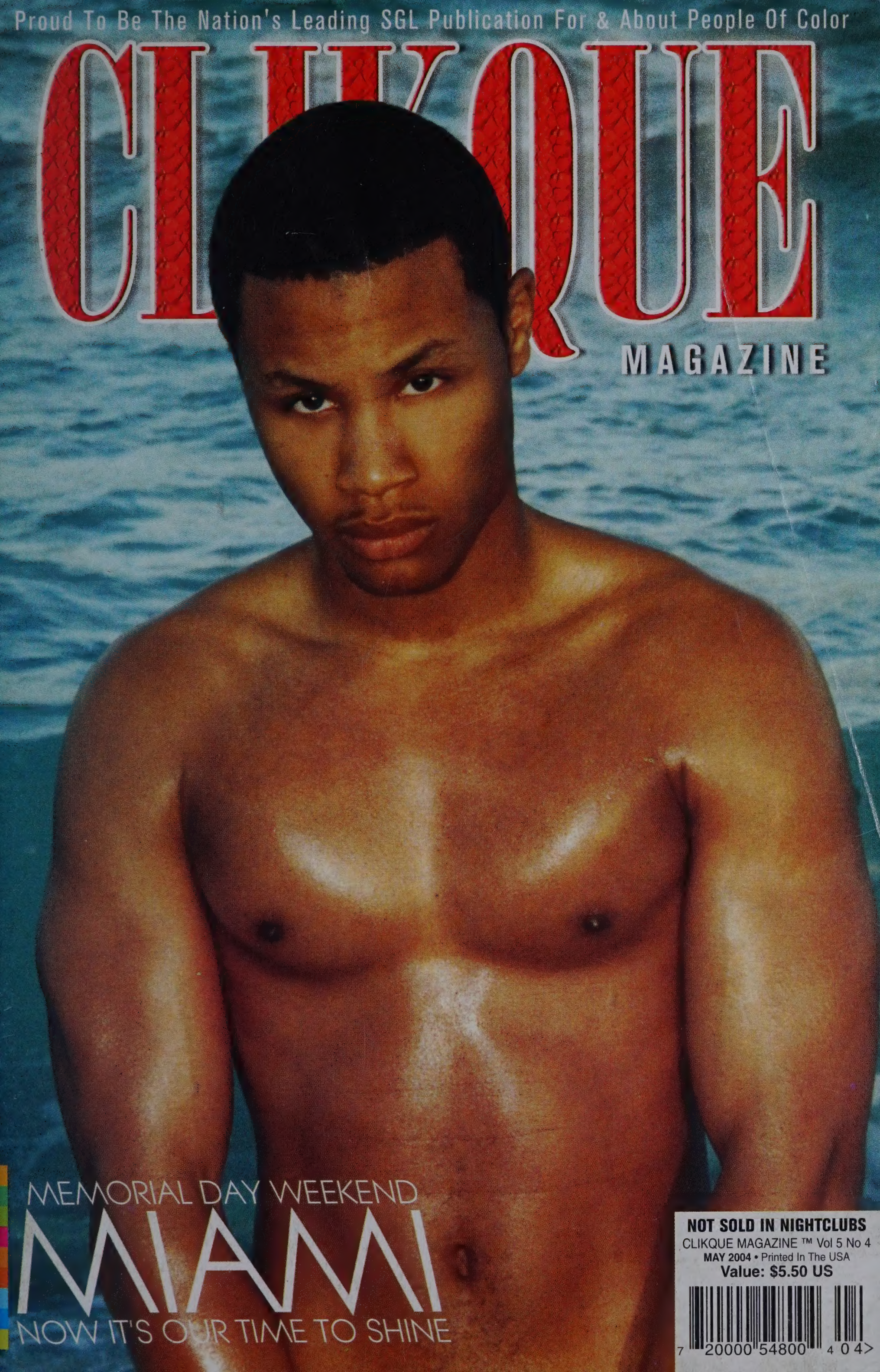

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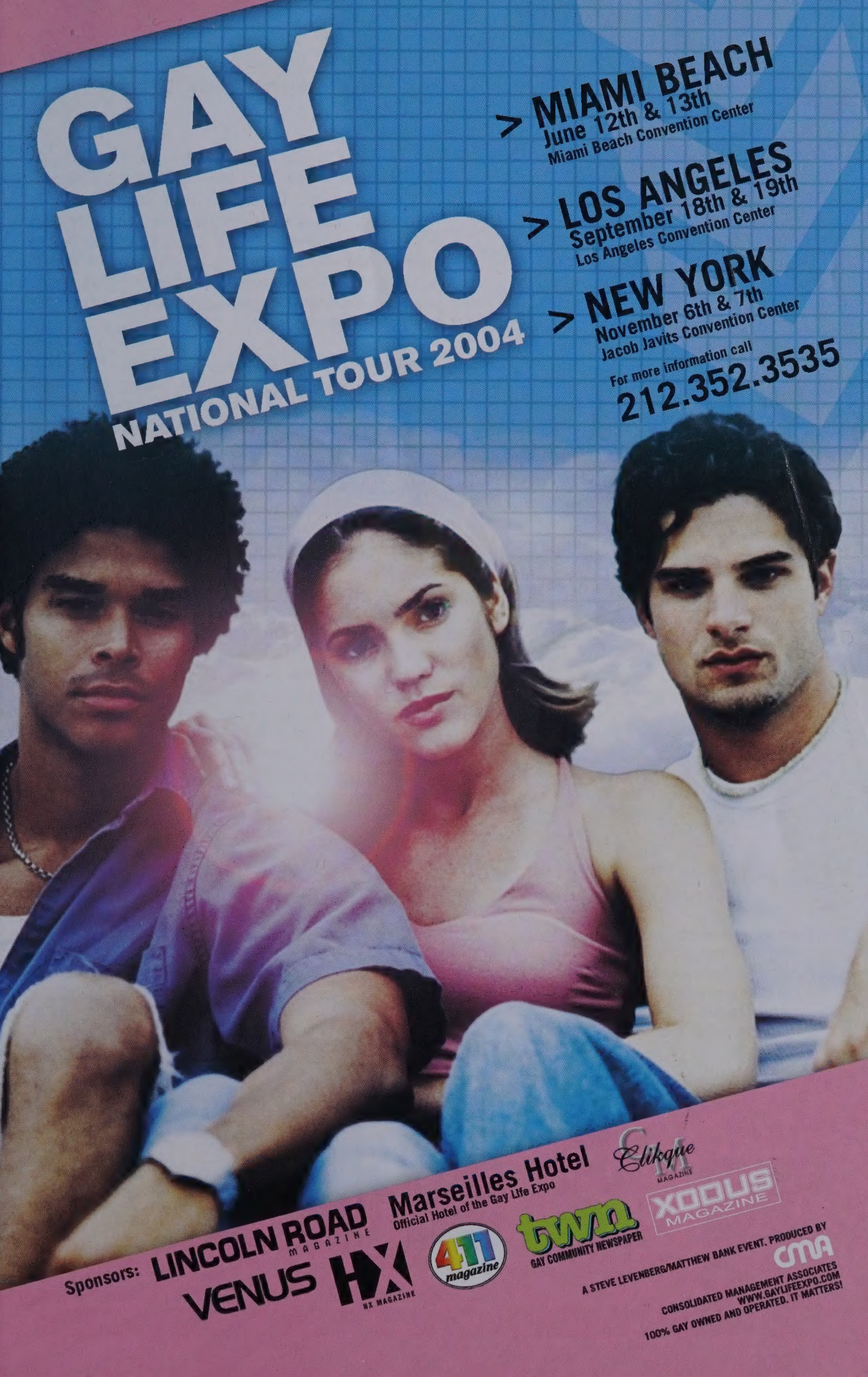

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EDITORIAL

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE — MAY 1998 THRU MAY 2004

Clikque MAGAZINE

Hello Clikque readers. This month marks 6 years that I have been publishing Clikque Magazine. Despite a few setbacks that resulted in our 2 year hiatus, this past January we returned on the scene better and stronger than ever...without loosing a beat. We've managed to regain our readership base, support from our advertisers and loyal subscribers. For this we are most grateful.

I have been in this business for a long time now and have traveled many roads. Along the way, there have been good experiences and there have been bad ones as well. Through it all, I have learned a great deal from all of the decisions made as Publisher of Clikque Magazine. With these experiences, I pledge to make Clikque Magazine even more reliable, reader friendly, entertaining and informative on issues relevant to our community.

The absence of Clikque has shown all of us that it is indeed an extremely valuable vehicle that plays a crucial role in bridging black gay communities through the country. Know that you also play a vital role in the stability, growth and strength of Clikque. Therefore, I ask that you continue to inform your friends about us. Continue to send articles, and continue to encourage businesses in you community to support this magazine that's provided to you at no cost (in most areas).

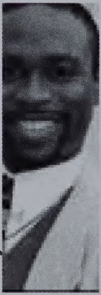
Thanks for your support and I look forward to bringing you the Nation's Premiere Magazine For and About Same Gender Loving People of Color.

Dwight Powell

Sincere thanks to the following individuals that have worked tirelessly for Clikque Magazine over the years. Thanks for continuing to support me to this day.

Dwight Powell

Founder / Editor-In-Chief
Clikque Magazine



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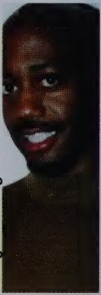

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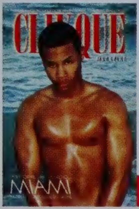

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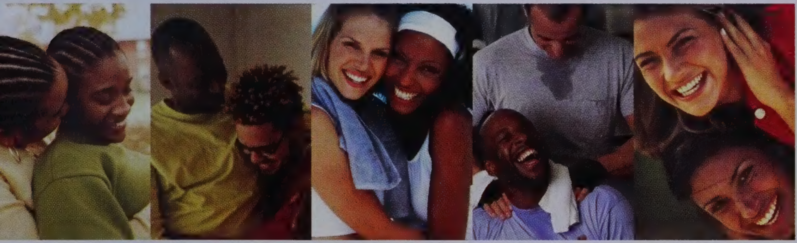

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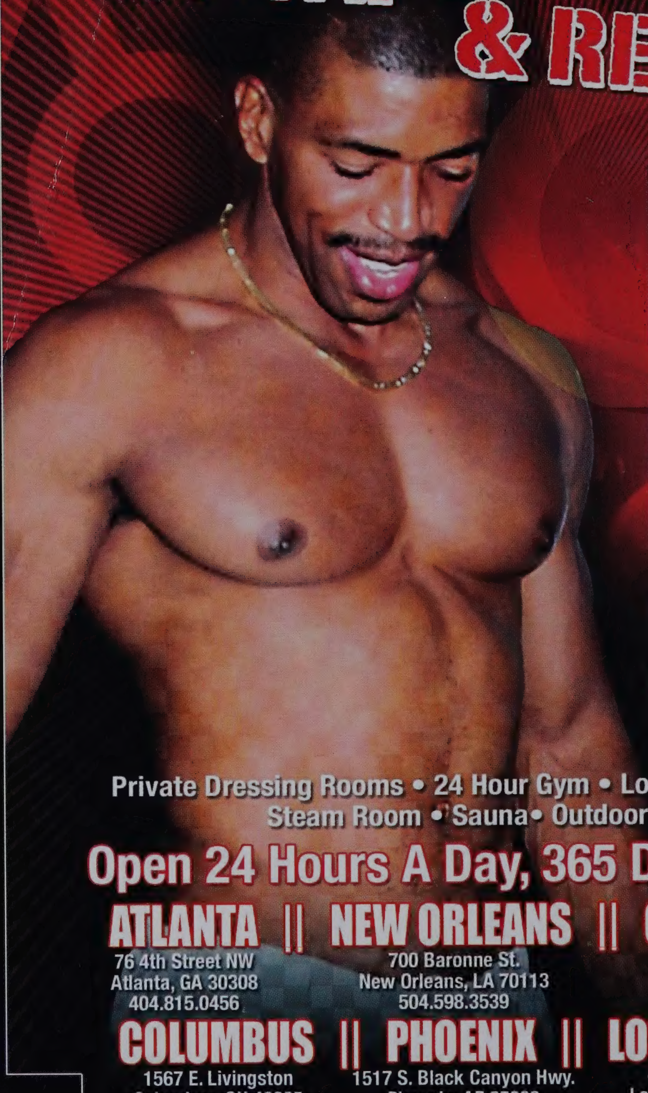

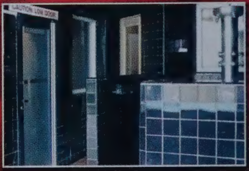

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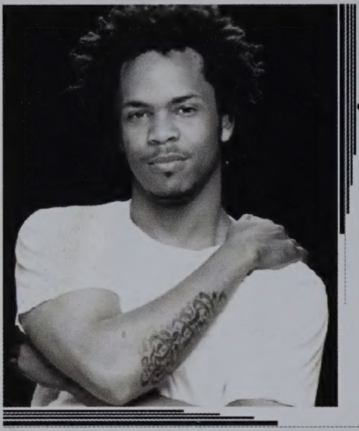

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BY TONY WINSTON

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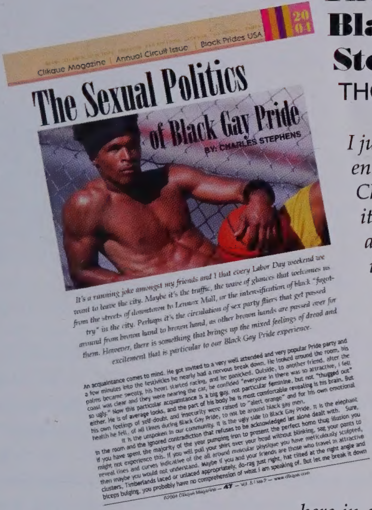
Clikque Magazine | Annual Circuit Issue | Black Prides USA

2004

The Sexual Politics of Black Gay Pride

BY: CHARLES STEPHENS

It's a running joke amongst my friends and I that every Labor Day weekend we want to leave the city. Maybe it's the traffic, the wave of glances that welcomes us from the streets of downtown to Lennox Mall, or the intensification of black "fagot-try" in the city. Perhaps it's the circulation of sex party fliers that get passed around from brown hand to brown hand, as other brown hands are passed over for them. However, there is something that brings up the mixed feelings of dread and excitement that is particular to our Black Gay Pride experience.

An acquaintance comes to mind. He got invited to a very well attended and very popular Pride party and a few minutes into the festivities he nearly had a nervous break down. He looked around the room, his palms became sweaty, his heart started racing, and he panicked. Outside, to another friend, after the coast was clear and they were nearing the car, he confided "everyone in there was so attractive, I felt so ugly." Now this particular acquaintance is a big guy, not particular feminine, but not "thugged out" either. He is of average looks, and the part of his body he is most comfortable revealing is his brain. But his own feelings of self-doubt and insecurity were raised to "alert orange" and for his own emotional health he felt, of all times during Black Gay Pride, to not be around black gay men.

It is the unspoken in our community. It is the ugly side to Black Gay Pride. It is the elephant in the room and the ignored contradiction that refuses to be acknowledged let alone dealt with. Sure, if you have spent the majority of the year pumping iron to present the perfect homo thug illusion you might not experience this. If you will pull your shirt over your head without blinking, sag your pants to reveal lines and curves indicative of the all around muscular physique you have meticulously sculpted, then maybe you would not understand. Maybe if you and your friends are those who travel in attractive clusters, Timberlands laced or unlaced appropriately, do-rag just right, hat tilted at the right angle and biceps bulging, you probably have no comprehension of what I am speaking of. But let me break it down

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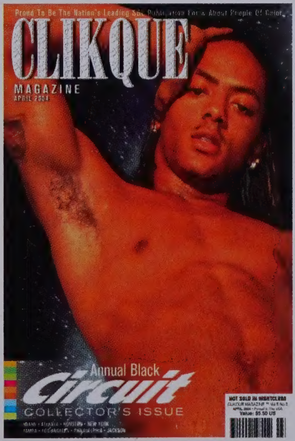
The Sexual Politics of the Black Gay Pride by Charles Stephens. I JUST WANTED TO SAY I THOUGHT HE HIT IT RIGHT ON THE NOSE.

I just read the article in the April edition of Clikque Mag, entitled "The Sexual Politics of the Black Gay Pride by Charles Stephens. I just wanted to say I thought he hit it right on the nose. Black gay pride has not really been about black gay people feeling proud to be who they are, instead its a continued reminder of how some of us are not cute enough or muscle enough or financially stable enough to be excepted by certain type of people. I had assumed that gay pride would be a time to mingle and meet other gay men, make new friends maybe even a special somebody. but its gotten away from that for the most part. I myself have a very toned body and have been told that im very sexy looking but it hurts me that sometimes that all that matters with certain groups of people and of course here in atl there is always someone better looking so one flaw and u could be dismissed for the next guy, its sad and I hope this type of treatment of our brotha's and sisters end soon. but I think its a result of the sexual explosion that has taken over in this country, u see it everyday in movies , TV, and music videos, sex is the main focus in getting peoples attention and the more sex appeal u have the more attention u will get, so now in the gay community if u are masculine with a tight body or a pretty boi thug type, u will get the positive attention and if u are not in that category than u are ignored and over looked and isolated, its wrong and hurtful and somehow we have to make a change but how do we do it, u know I love my body and the attention I get in the spring when I put on a tank top or muscle shirt, but I knew that type of attention would not give me the self esteem that I was lacking, for me it was my faith in God and realizing that a good attitude on life and treating people with love and kindness is the true link to being happy and happy people don't hate on others just because they don't look a certain way, I pray that more and more of us in the life can appreciate the difference in the gay community whether a person is fem or overweight or just average, we need to stop judging and start looking at people for what's in there heart, everyone we meet may not be a lover or mate but just maybe they can be a friend who knows, I have overweight friends I have fem friends muscle friends pretty boi wanna be thug friends lol and i love em all, and would not change anything about them. well almost anything :) please thank Mr. Stephens for touching on this subject, I hope and pray that enough people read the article and take the message to heart, I know I did,

--Tony Winston
faithful clikque reader

This is in response to the article " The Sexual Politics of Black Gay Pride." First let me say it was well written and past time it was noticed. I agree with the author totally. I am what most



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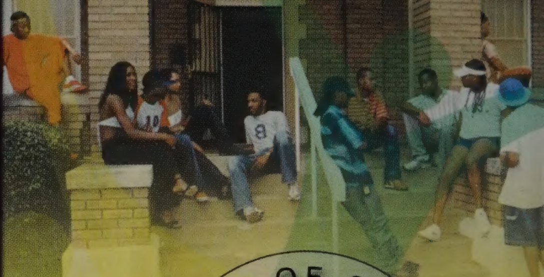

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people consider handsome, cute, or sexy (depending on the season) but like a lot of Pride attendees I still feel the need to compare myself against others that are in attendance. Pride is a time for black gay men to realize that the beauty of our gayness and blackness does not lie in dress, attitude, or prowess but in the understanding and developing of our community. I applaud Clikque's effort to discuss a topic that has a large impact on the divisiveness of our community. My friends and I do not celebrate Black Pride because we feel the events are aimed at the "DL" crowd or "sex party" crowd. We have attended some of the workshops and they simply have no pizazz -- no interests. The message is always the same -- HIV/AIDS prevention -- now undoubtedly we do need to continue to be educated the this epidemic but when will the event cover things we deal with everyday. It may be hard for some to believe, but there are black gay men that deal with other issues besides HIV/AIDS. Issues dealing with same sex relationships of color and how to maintain them, how "DL" not only affecting black heterosexual women but the toll its taking on our black gay men their quest for monogamus relationships and putting them at risk, the demand for equal rights to gay marriage because contrary to what most young black gay men think they too will soon like to eventually settle with the person of their choice, and host of other issues on social and psychological areas that directly affect our community. My advice to In The Life Atlanta is if clubbin and sex parties have the highest attendance then thats where the social, pschological, and health concern messages need to be -- whether by print, television, radio or D.J. booth. We have to find new ways to reach our communities especially those members that feel they are not a part of same-sex loving community (i.e. "DL"). Thank you Clikque for unwanning fight to inform our communities about social issues that impact us as a whole.

- Damond Sharlow

Send Letters To The Editor To
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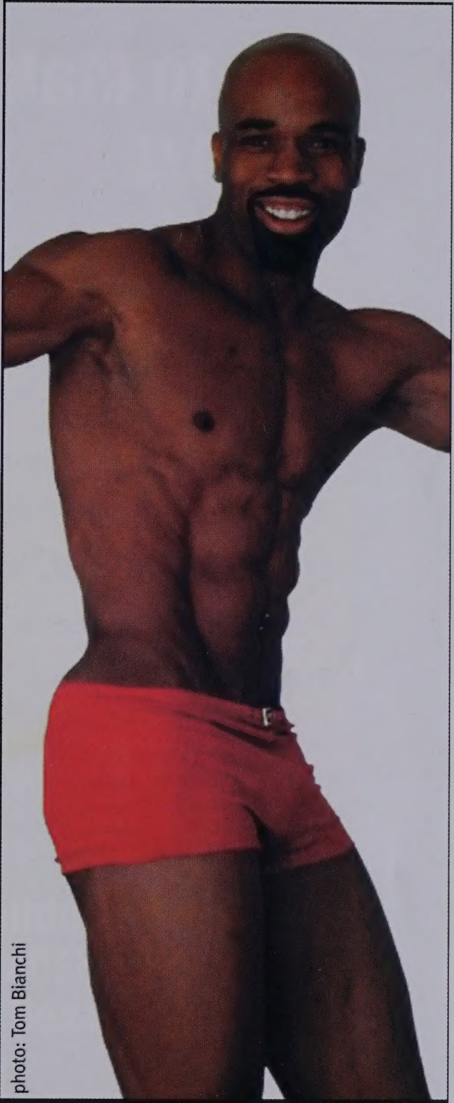

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HIV: **I try my best, lol.**

PnPTina: Hey Boys, can I join in ?

HIV: **Hell yeah Tina, you're always welcome to further the cause, lol.**

>>>>> **End of Chat Sequence** <<<<<

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What the Law Says

■ Did you know that some states have laws concerning HIV disclosure? To find out what the laws are in your state regarding HIV disclosure, STD exposure, sodomy and more, visit the Web site for the HIV Criminal Law and Policy Project.

■ After all, knowledge about our partners' sexual history and status is one barometer of risk, regardless of our own HIV or STD status.

But the conversation is easier said than done.

"I just think it's something most people don't want to talk about. They would rather not deal with it than confront the awkwardness of asking," says Taylor*, a 39 year old photographer who lives in New York City. "Asking someone in a bar would be horribly awkward," he adds.

The scary fact is a lot of men who have sex with men (MSM) trust sexual partners to disclose their HIV status -- and make determinations about risk based on what partners say -- according to findings in the report Vital Statistics 2002, the sixth annual Gay Men's Sex Survey.

Men were recruited for the survey, conducted by Sigma Research in partnership with 119 health promotion agencies across the United Kingdom, at Pride events, on the Internet, and using booklets that were distributed to HIV health promoters working with MSM.

> **It comes down to the message we've all heard a zillion times, I know. Use condoms!**

Although we have observed an overall decrease in recent years, expectations that men with HIV will tell a prospective sexual partner their HIV status are still very wide-

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spread," according to a report. "Over a third of all men not tested HIV positive both expected a positive partner to disclose their status prior to sex and would not want to then have sex if they did."

It's one thing to decide not to ask, but why trust people to tell you, especially when they know you may not have sex with them after they disclose their status?

Taylor says if you're having safer sex, you don't necessarily need to ask the question, but assuming your partner is HIV-negative may lead to risk taking that otherwise wouldn't occur.

"It's much easier to discuss HIV status online when you're meeting partners. That's easy, it's not as awkward to do," says Taylor. "It's pretty common in the online dialogue to ask about HIV status. In fact, profiles usually address it so you don't even have to ask," he says.

But as the study authors warn, "in this climate, it is difficult to see what incentive men with HIV have for disclosing their HIV status."

Not to mention the reality that some men may not be honest, or may not have been tested in a long time. The fact is Taylor hasn't been tested in a long time -- he won't say just how long -- and he considers himself negative, despite some concern.

That's why researchers say educating people about the reality that some men with HIV won't disclose -- or don't know -- their status is a huge and necessary part of future HIV prevention efforts. "Disabusing negative and untested men of the notion that positive HIV disclosure will happen (and that their risk assessments can be based on such an assumption) remains a vital health promotion aim," the survey authors wrote.

It comes down to the message we've all heard a zillion times, I know. Use condoms.

The survey also found that discrimination, harassment and abuse remains a huge problem for MSM. "Despite advances in social and political equality, everyday cruelty and harassment of gay and bisexual men continues. A third of all men had been verbally abused in the last year. One-in-four has experienced discrimination from strangers in public (verbal and physical abuse) with the workplace being the next most common site of abuse and discrimination."

While some people may make no connection between homophobia and risk taking, the synergy between the two seems evident. "You try being in the closet for much of your adult life," Taylor says. When you finally get to the point when you are out and having sex, after missing your adolescence, and a large part of adulthood, he explains, you don't want to deal with HIV and other downers when you have sex. But the cost of ignoring such issues might be your life.

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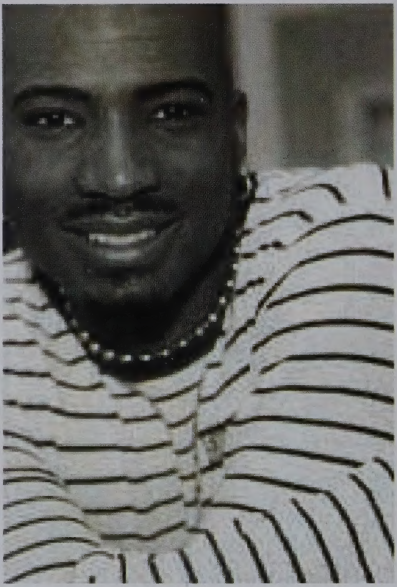
By SCOTTIE ROBINSON



Wake-up Call!

Sleeper cells - its time to arise, shine and unite. Right now, across the United States Legislators and Christian Coalitions have forged an alliance to expedite the elimination of your rights and privileges as American citizens. First, it was the enslaved Africans, then it was the Jewish, and now discrimination is resting on the doorstep of same gender loving people.

History like time has a way of revealing its truth to us over and over again. Repeating the same cycle is supposed to be a spiritual journey upwards to our highest love vibration. However, when you target a group of people, and create special laws to deny these persons their god given right to pursue a positive life, filled with happiness, love, liberty, and secure employment - you have committed discrimination.

As we come to yet another opportunity for America to seek a higher level of love consciousness, fear, prejudice and greed have united with its former enemy - the Black Clergy. Some of the same Black Preachers who inspired thousands to civil action have now become the Pharisees advocating the elimination of the Outcasts by supporting special laws created for the purpose of discrimination against Black same gender loving people. Whatever happened to loving thy neighbor as thyself?

I am sure most racists and bigots are laughing at the hypocrisy of Black Mothers and Fathers who would deny their very own children unconditional love. Whether Black same gender loving people are born this way, made this way by others, or have chosen this experience of their own free will - please don't forget the lesson of "Operation: Perpetual Enslavement." Remember? Separate the young from the old, the women from the men, the fair skin from the dark skin, the house nigger from the field nigger, and the gay from the straight. Next, use legislators to establish laws to maintain a system of discrimination; then use the approved clergy to justify oppression with the Bible we gave them. And while they are fighting amongst themselves for control of the crumbs, we'll take the whole pie. Remember? If you can deny one group of peoples their basic human rights, with the help of another minority group, then you can systematically discriminate against all.

Sleeper cells - Its time to arise and shine and unite. Do you know who you are? You have heard what they've said about

CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

tuesdays

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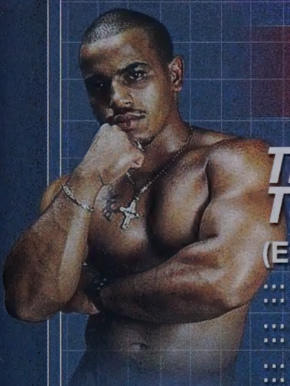

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By SCOTTIE ROBINSON

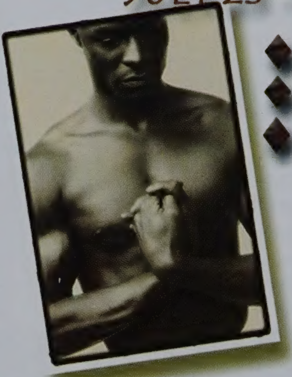
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

you, but kept silent. You have seen their mistreatment of us, but you have turned a blind eye. You have known the power of same gender love, but because of fear and prejudice you have refused to share it with your family, friends and loved ones. Now is the time to arise and speak-up for yourself! Now is the time to let your love shine so bright it frightens the powerful and liberates the Outcasts. Now is the time for unity and collective action! Wake-up. Wake-up.

We need 10,000 sleeper cells to join with us Labor Day for Atlanta's Black Pride March 2004, to make one last eleventh hour appeal to the heart consciousness of mainstream Black America. Creating special laws to stop same gender loving people from the right to express love for one another through marriage is discrimination. This blatant attack on the 14th amendment only serves the needs of the elite power structure and unequivocally repeats the cycle of discrimination.

Sleeper cells - arise, shine and unite. This year's Atlanta Black Pride March is the opportunity of a lifetime. With 10,000 Black LGBT Angels marching for freedom of expression we can send a clear and concise message to the Black church that we are here we are not invisible, and refuse to allow our black brothers and sisters to live in ignorance any longer. Come-out sleeper cells, come-out of the closet!! Your Black LGBT brothas and sistahs need to see your face and document your spiritual journey upward. What are you doing to Stand-up & Represent? Are you Black, Out & Proud?

Stand-up & Represent so you might be able fight oppression loudly & passionately.



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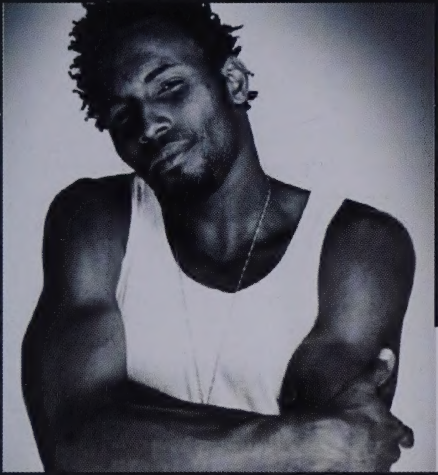

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY CLIKQUE
MAY 1998 - MAY 2004

OUR HISTORY

Clikque Magazine began publishing 6 year ago in Houston Texas, when an astute businessman and graphic artist extraordinaire, Dwight Powell and literary genius, Lewis Nicholson.

Powell, although relatively new to the gay media arena, was however no stranger to the design and print industry. While employed with Homes & Land Publishing Corporation, the Houston Chronicle and Houston Creative Connection, Powell gained vast knowledge and experience that would prove necessary for his future endeavors, which were to one day own his own publication and publishing company. One of those dreams has been realized and he will soon be working on the other.

Lewis Nicholson is a graduate of the City University Of New York(Brooklyn College)where he earned a degree in Journalism and Philosophy and a minor in Economics. He published a magazine called Clikque out of New York city much along the same lines as the new more sophisticated magazine that you are reading today.

At their first meeting they decided to keep the name Clikque though the New Magazine would be much more comprehensive and graphically superior. One must agree that the name Clikque is easy to remember and a sure winner. Besides, Nicholson was insistent that the name Clikque was worth gold.

Dwight Powell, was rather disenchanted with the publications that were available for and representing our black gay and lesbian community.

Although there were a few good publications such as Venus, SBC and Whazzup, these publications weren't readily available in his own community, which was Houston at the time. Mr Powell shared with us how he grew increasingly annoyed with the lack of black representation in

Taylor Mabrie
MAY1998

Kimla Mouton
JUN1998

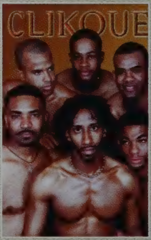
Whitney Mugler
JUL1998

George King
AUG/SEPT1998

Lance Forrest
OCT1998

Pepper LaBeija
NOV1998

Monté St. James
Terrance
DEC1998


Anthony, BJ, Jemahld
Chaka, Billy & Carlos
JAN1999

Hotter Than July
Rod Martin
FEB1999

Necole Luv Dupree
MAR1999

the gay media. Publications such as This Week in Texas (TWIT) and Houston Voice , both Houston publications rarely features the Black Gay community. And when they do, it's normally around black history month or Juneteenth. What's even more annoying, says Powell, "when we are recognized or given some sort of representation, it's normally not very tasteful or dignified."

In November of 1997, Powell decided that it would have to take a black person to truly and tastefully represent his own his black, gay, lesbian, and transgendered community. Rethinking lessons taught many moons ago in his marketing class at Florida State University, Powell began his market segmentation, demographic studies and probing on how to succeed in this arena. Confronted with the knowledge that most new publications go "belly-up" within the first six months, Powell was driven to do everything that would be necessary in an attempt to realize his dreams.

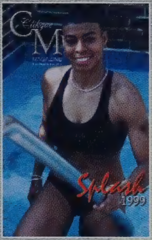
After two months of planning, Powell was eager and ready to unveil his new product named FRESH, a full-color, glossy digest sized magazine for African Americans in the life. Well, as you know by now, Dwight did not name his magazine FRESH. Instead, it was named CLIKQUE and Lewis became his partner. In January of 1998, Mr Powell informed Derrick Miles a good friend of his, who also resided in Houston, of his plans to publish a magazine. Ironically, Miles was a friend of Nicholson's. Lewis Nicholson once published a magazine out of New York by the name of CLIKQUE. "Although reluctant at first, I am really glad that Lewis convinced me, to use the name CLIKQUE, it is very unique and rather catchie", says Powell.

The name Clikque is actually a derivative of the word Clique because it was representative of a group of friend(a Clique) from Prospects Heights Brooklyn who started the old magazine bearing that name.The k was inserted for aesthetic purposes.

While still employed as a graphic artist and working 50+ hours a week at Houston Creative Connection, Powell sold ads during his lunch breaks and created them at night while Nicholson During this period wrote and collected articles. With an extremely reduced social life, They both became obsessed and engrossed in CLIKQUE Magazine. For them, this was truly a labor of love, filled with anticipation and excitement.

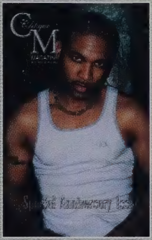
On Tuesday April 26, 1998 Clikque Magazine was launched at Rascals The Nightclub, in Houston Texas. In the company of most of his friends and colleagues, Dwight Powell along with Lewis Nicholson unveiled a product that would today become the nations leading publication for African-Americans "in the life". "This was probably the proudest moment in my life",

APRIL 1999



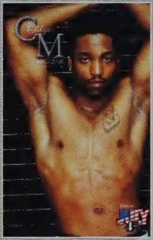
Sandy

MAY 1999



Dwight Powell

JUN 1999



Maceo

JUL 1999

CM
Hotter Than July

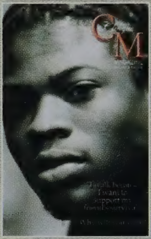
Carl Dvgve

AUG 1999

Cory Scott

SEPT1999

Taj



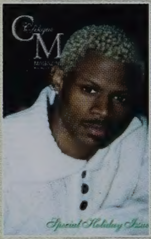
OCT1999

AID Atlanta
AIDS Walk Campaign

CM
The Fall Fashion Issue

NOV1999

Nestor Zapata



DEC1999

Andre Mizrahi

CM
MILLENNIUM

JAN2000

Thomas

Mr. Powell recalls. "I did exactly what I wanted to do, and that was to produce a nice, color, glossy, quality publication for all black people to be proud of. There were a lot of people in attendance that were very excited for us and eagerly welcomed this magazine that was so desperately needed in the area." says Powell.

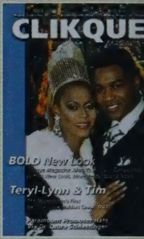
The Magazine has come a long way since May of 1998. According to the duo, there were many that didn't think that the magazine in its current format would survive. Many conceded that producing a 32 page magazine, especially a black magazine on a monthly basis would be almost impossible in Houston. It is easy to understand why folks had those thoughts, for one, gaining the support of the black gay community and businesses is very difficult, especially when that community is so closeted. The locals in Houston fell in love with the magazine instantly, but unfortunately the support from the business sectors would not follow. Undoubtably, Dwight and Lewis had the best product on the market, but the gay businesses, which where predominantly white owned, didn't feel as though there was a market for them to tap into.

There where so many times that Dwight Powell wanted to throw in the towel and call it quits. Month after month he continued to loose thousands and thousands of dollars, fought numerous battles with folks that attempted to weaken his working relationship with Lewis Nicholson as they also tried to destroy and defame the magazine. At the same time, it was a constant struggle hiding from the community, the difficulties that he and the magazine were experiencing.

Dwight recalls that had it not been for Grover Fortenberry at Rascals, Clikque Magazine probably wouldn't be here today. In the early days, Rascals accounted for almost 50% of the paid advertisements in the magazine, and for this the owner and staff at Clikque Magazine are extremely grateful. Also instrumental in the survival of the magazine in the early days was

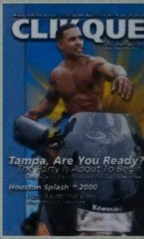
FEB2000

"Trois" Cast



MAR2000

Teryl-Lynn Foxx
Tim Bolhar

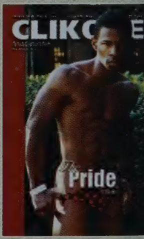


APRIL2000

Lil Red

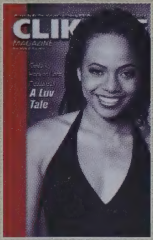
MAY2000

Dwight Powell



JUNE2000

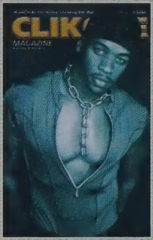
Persuation


JULY2000

Gina Davis
(from Show Girls)

AUG2000

ATL Blk Pride


SEPT2000

Ashante

FEB2001

Monifah

MAR2001

Stasha Sanchez

Nestor Zapata, then companion of Dwight Powell and Derrick Miles from Incognito The Club. Derrick proved to be a good advisor to Powell on positive directions in which to take the magazine.

But, the long term goals and aspirations that Powell had envisioned for his magazine would not be realized by two clubs in Houston. That's when he decided to move the magazine to Atlanta, a vibrant and prime market ready for such a publication. By this time, Nicholson wasn't very active in the day to day operation of the magazine and his working relationship with Powell had grown to the point of being almost non existent.

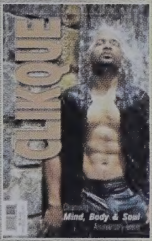
At first Lewis wasn't very enchanted about the idea of Dwight moving the magazine, until he later agreed that the magazine had reached its peak in Houston and that Atlanta was the best move the magazine could make. One week later, in a very bold move, Dwight left his most reliable source of income, in search of a dream which he hoped to be realized in the ATL and the rest is history.

Right away, Clikque became a big hit in Atlanta. The magazine was warmly and graciously received by the late David Hampton from TRAXX nightclub and the folks at In The Life Atlanta, a community based organization for African-Americans "In The Life". Initially, when Clikque moved its headquarters to Atlanta, it had a page count of 40 pages with a few ads. Last month the magazine peaked to a page count of 80 pages featuring ads from businesses all over America. Clikque is distributed at bookstores, nightclubs and other establishments in every state in the country. WOW!

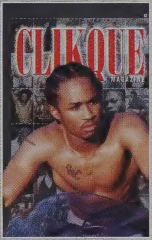
By far, Clikque is now the most recognized and respected publication about and for same gender loving folks. Since it's inception, Clikque has been the official guide of many prestigious events, prides and circuit parties.

APR2001

Houston Splash


MAY2001

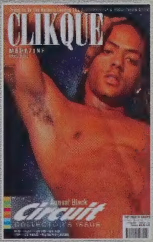
Dwight Powell


JAN2004

Shawn Mucker

FEB/MAR2004

Kassie


APR2004

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SUBSCRIPTION FORM ON PAGE 45

ASK Bianca

Bianca is interested in helping you solve some of the greater mysteries of life. Write her at Clikque Magazine,931 South Park Road, Suite 105, Hollywood FL 33021
Or email her C/o Clikque1@aol.com

Hello kids,
Welcome back to Axk (Ask) Bianca here at Clikque Magazine. I really enjoyed my time spent in Jail and gyrlls let me tell you. I had every man there in the palms of my hands and I mean that literally. I went in a gyrll and came out a muscle bound hunkasaurus. My boyfriends love the new me. One claims that there is nothing better than screwing a real man. I never thought of myself as a real man but, what ever! I am pleased to announce that I am no longer on crack and I rarely use speed anymore. My new best friend is miss Betty Ford and I met Monica Lewinsky on my way from court one day. Now I am filing a case against the president because I was told that he was trying to make a pass on my picture as he was going through my FBI files one day. Anyway I am happy to be back and this month I am responding to your letters written before I was carted off to the Island ...(Rikers) in that nice blue and white carriage driven by two of New York's finest. Oh, by the way I moved to Miami with the Publishers of this rag but I am going to run right back to Atlanta if I don't get what I came here for.

Dear Bianca,
I am a 27yr-old black successful male. I've been dating my girl for 4 years and we are planning on getting married this June. Recently at the gym, I was propositioned by a guy and I told him I did not swing that way. However, I have been thinking about him ever since. I love my girl with all my heart but I have been having dreams about that dude. Bianka does this mean I am attracted to guys? What should I do. Do I tell my future wife? Damn, why is life so confusing.
Dreaming of biceps.

Dear Dreaming of biceps,
You need to come to terms with your self. I don't believe for a minute that this is the first time that you have found yourself thinking about dick. Do you think straight men who are propositioned by other men find themselves thinking about men from there on? Lies! I am afraid that you should take this guy up on his offer if you haven't already and have yourself a good time in the bulging biceps of another man. Trust me on this, it feels real good. You do not love your girl with all your heart because there is no such thing. You need to tell her that you find a man attractive and that her biceps are not big enough. Tell her to find a straight man, even though he won't be as good as you are in bed. About your being attracted to guys, do you really need my advice? If you are not attracted to guys then I don't know what your obsession is with this man's biceps. By the power invested in me I now declare you a full fledged faggot.

Dear Bianca,
Recently my boyfriend was hospitalized. Although I never asked, he volunteered to me that while he was in the hospital he tested negative for HIV. Three days ago I was in his house reading a magazine and there was a letter in it from his physician stating that he was positive for the HIV virus. I feel betrayed because he lied to me and I didn't ask in the first place. I will support him no matter what. Should I tell him that I know? What should I do?
Dazed and confused Chicago, Illinois.

Now, Miss Gyrll in Illinois,
You Midwestern kids slay me. You just happened to be reading a magazine in your mans house, and out jumps this doctors note with his HIV status and it lands directly in your face, at eye level. You were not snooping around and you had no idea he could be positive. Where exactly did you find the note, you lying queen? You and I both know that you cannot tell this man of your findings until he tells, you because you are likely to get a severe ass whoppin. He lied to you because he knew you would not be able to handle the truth. You feel betrayed? Ha! How do you think he is going to feel when he finds out that you went through his personal files. Come clean with your boyfriend and tell him the truth. Even though you are not used to doing so, it feels good. He may or may not dump your ass but I am sure you will be able to handle it. Try to keep your messy life clean in "98"

Dear Bianca,
My roommates and I are all light skinned and beautiful and we get along with everyone just fine. We are smart, intelligent, funny and genuinely sweet people. We have friends of all persuasions, races, shades of blackness and degrees of intelligence. Lately we have found ourselves having to defend our beauty based on our skin color. Some darker complexioned friends of ours have been taking issue with us claiming that, we are no longer associating with them. We had to cut some people off and push others to a far corner, but these decisions were not based on skin color, they were based on these peoples manners and attitudes. Too bad they happened to be dark skinned blacks. Now, we have to live with the legacy of having people talk about, how we think we are all that, because we are light skinned and beautiful. How do we cut these people off and restore our good name as the fun loving open minded individuals that we are.
Light skinned and Beautiful in Houston.

Dear L S and B in H-town,
Your letter has a very shady tone and I doubt that you are as sweet as you think you are. I smell something funky, your breath maybe? I wish you had sent a picture of your beauty because I think you are confusing light skinned with being beautiful. The two are not one and the same and should never be used interchangeably. They can be complementary but they are not substitutes. I tend to believe that your friends are right, and that you cut those loose who were not yellow enough for your liking. You ought to be ashamed of yourself and go apologize to those nice darker skinned friends of yours and beg them to take you back as a friend. How convenient that your roommates all happen to be light skinned. You southern girls are a trip and I can't wait to get my hands on a few of your behinds and slap some sense into your feeble minds. On the other hand you have every right to cut anyone loose without a viable reason, just be strong enough to deal with the consequences. When all the party invites go passing by your address don't sit and wonder why, you already know the reason. How ever if you are indeed a good person I would suggest that you take the situation to your God or buy those friends of yours something fierce, something Cartier, Mugler or Vivian Westwood may do the trick.
Good luck! Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I've been involved in a commuter relationship for the last six months. My boyfriend lives in New York and I live in Washington DC. We enjoy spending time with one another, sharing, giving, quiet moments, and each other's com-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 26

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

pany. We are totally into one another. We connect on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level. We attend church together. I am very religious and very involved in the church. He is somewhat religious. Bianca, our love making is out of this world. We can't get enough of each other. It is incredible but sometimes after sex I feel guilty and conflicted. Recently, I interrupted our lovemaking because I just felt that something wasn't right. I love my boyfriend, but I love God more. I want to please God and the things that we do are not pleasing to God. I think that my guilt and apparent contradiction are driving him away. I am causing a lot of stress in our relationship. I don't want to lose my boyfriend. I want what we have and share. Bianca, what should I do.
Conflicted.

Dearest Conflicted.
Your problem is not uncommon. Quite frankly, it is the most popular crisis the kids are facing these days. Everyone has gotten so religious, but the gay lifestyle and most religions are in direct conflict. One club promoter in DC gave up the life for religion and is having a difficult time coping with the decision and being faithful to his belief. On a practical level I would recommend that you accept yourself for who you are and realize that God loves you, no matter what and that you are his child. Focus more on your spirituality and personal relationship with God and not some organized religious belief. He is a loving and forgiving God and knows you and your thoughts. You can run but you cannot hide from yourself. You need to make a decision real soon because it is not just about you and your God anymore you have another loving human being caught up in this mess. What is he supposed to do when you decide to do what is best for you. If you must, try to make one person miserable, not two. If you love your boyfriend and don't want to lose him then it seems, that what you need to do is work things out with your God. He made you and will work with you on this issue. I am no authority on the God subject except that I fear him. Your relationship with him is something only you can decide. Best wishes, good luck and try not to hurt your boyfriend too badly when all is said and done.

Dear Bianca,
My boyfriend of the last two months has decided that we should be just friends. He really means this and I can tell by the way he hugs me when we get together these days. Unlike other people who when they say let's be friends, this one seems to mean it. In the past, lets be friends usually meant, don't ever call me again. This time he is actually making an effort to be platonic friends and it is driving me crazy since I am very much in love with him still. What to do?
Caught up- in New York!

Dear Caught up!
Get a hold of yourself girl and take a firm grip. When people say these things they usually mean it and changing their minds is not usually a part of the plan. If the man says it, that means he has been thinking about it for at least a month. The first time killer dumped my ass he had already been involved with someone else for a whole month. I am not suggesting your man has moved on, only that he means what he says. It is a very difficult situation being friends with a man you are in love with but you only have two options. Accept the friendship and suffer while you get over him or kiss him good bye for a while and stay out of his way while you re-cooperate. I am sure your friends will be more than willing to help you through this time and if they don't, you can have killers place in my bed since he claims it is too hot for us to sleep together. Good luck girl and be good. Love Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I have made a very sticky bed and now I am having difficulty sleeping in it. I slutted around and I had quite a few friends and roommates and other peoples boyfriends. Not only that, but I had boyfriends of friends of mine and their roommates as well. I caused a lot of chaos and confusion in many a households and then I got bit by the true love bug. My problem is that, as in all cities, mine included, gay people all know each other and are separated by less than six degrees. Now my past is back to haunt me. I find myself having to explain to my new love how and in what way I was involved with these people. I cannot tell him the truth for fear he will leave me. What am I supposed to do?
Haunted by my past- Mississippi.

Dear Mississippi,
If you were a true pro you would never have to be explaining anything to your new boyfriend. Here is my advice. All that happened before he came along is your business and all that has happened since, is yours and his jointly. Because people are nosy and faggits are fierce and will be telling him all they know, I would suggest that you purge on you own. Make him a great dinner, buy him something diamond, then very nonchalantly tell him who you slept with and how horrible they all were. Tell him how he has tamed you and how sorry you feel for having wasted so much time on those good-for-nothings. With a full stomach and a diamond he will be too relaxed to argue. As my grandmother used to say, "hunger fuels anger." Come clean, this way he will be able to tell the gossip mongers that he is well aware of what you used to do. In order to appear credible though, you will need to stop slutting around in case someone decides to get messy and tell him that you are still living a loose life. Sorry honey, but every hoe has his day and today seems to be yours.
Good Luck, - Bianca.

Dear Bianca,
I recently relocated myself to Houston, Texas, from New York City. Houston isn't exactly the cultural Mecca of the western world, much unlike New York. While I have adjusted to most of the strange southern customs of Texans, I must say that I am homesick for some Boriquen dick. I have found few Latinos to bump wallets with in my new neighborhood, and don't know
where to look. Even the Baptist church I attend has no papis to offer, and you know how good and god-fearing some Puerto Ricans can be. So where, in this hell called Houston, can I find myself some uncut Latin trade?
Anita Bicho

Dear Seõrita Bicho
Here's what you have to do: Make your way to your local Catholic Church and before you know it you'll be walking down the aisle with a hot uncut papi chulo. Unfortunately he might be Mexican and not Rican but that's okay; it's just different spices but basically the same flavor, although Ricans are tastier. Here's wishing you much skin.
Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I have face, I have carta! mamma ketch, it is ovah for me.I am a usually sweet person but like Latifah I have had it up to here with these trifling negroes in the DC area. I earn an honest living and I buy my own clothing and pay my bills on time. My problem, however, is that there are some kids who call themselves God-fearing Christians who can't seem to stop speaking evil of me.Their stories are unfounded and straight up lies. For example, the one that says I don't like to work and that a man is supporting me. While I wish I had a man supporting me that is not true yet. The part that bothers me most though, is that they keep telling this man with whom I am having a special relationship that I am not worth shit, and then they tell me he says I am a nymphomaniac with an insatiable desire for sex. They are trying to break us up.These kids won't leave me alone and I am about to strangle the bitch who came on to me, then went and told my boyfriend that I always come on to him. Help me before I end up in prison for one of these trifling hoes. Thanks in advance -
Bothered in DC

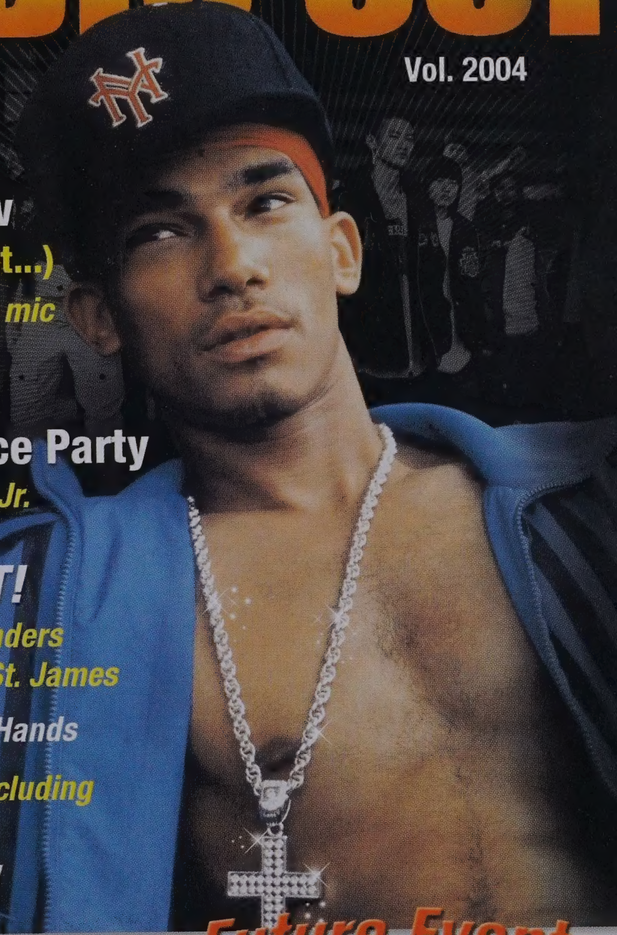
Dear Bothered in DC,
Girl, I am sorry to hear about your problem but had this letter not been post marked I would have sworn my editor wrote it. He has a similar problem with the church going queens here in Houston and this is how I told him to deal with it. First give God thanks that they are still talking about you, because this is a clear indication that you are alive and still looking glamorous. They don't talk about ugly or non-threatening people. You are obviously a star if when they get together over a good cup of latte the first thing off their lips is your name. You are fabulous. When you run into these viscous girls in the street be as plastic as saran wrap and act like you love them dearly. This will make them bitter to see you so happy. Have their boyfriends and then send the thank you notes to the girls instead. If that doesn't make you feel better, then throw a party and invite them, dress like the goddess that you are, act like a star, then they will truly talk about you. Take

CONTINUES ON PAGE 40

CLUB CITY LIGHTS

STUDIO 601

Vol. 2004



::: FRIDAYS

Weekend Baby Show

(Start your weekend right...)

Vith your host Dirty D on the mic

::: SATURDAYS

Da BIG Show & Dance Party

Show hosted by LC Simpson Jr.

::: WHAT 2 EXPECT!

Party with our friendly bartenders
Dee Dee Labelle & Terrance St. James

Music by Jackson's best DJ Hands

Drink specials every night including
our magnificent daiquaries

Doors Open @ 10:30PM Until

Look Out For These Future Events

events

May 14th – Diva At Large
June 20th – Mr. & Ms Essence of Beauty
June 25th – Mr. & Ms Gay Pride

Annual Gay Pride
August 6-8th

200 North Mill St., Jackson, Mississippi
For More Info Call: 601-353-0059

Another NuFlava Design 214.924.1412

LIFE
GUARD
ON
DUTY
SIZZLE 2004

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

THURS MAY 27TH - 31ST

MIAMI

SIZZLE 2004

For five (5) days beginning on Thursday 27th May, 2004, party seekers from around the country will convene in sunny Miami, Florida celebrating life, Pride & liberty!

Why Miami? Well, Miami is unlike any other city in the United States. It's a city in the making, unpredictable, ever changing, and simultaneously laid-back. Residents and tourists alike consider Miami a lush, exotic paradise, and a smorgasbord of style, substance, and flare. Furthermore, Miami has proven to be extremely open and accepting of all cultures, ethnicity and sexual orientations.

Come and experience the pulsating nightlife and beaches of Miami from dusk till dawn. Swirling around lakes,waterways, inlets, harbors, marinas and the historic Miami River, Miami is a fragrant spicy bouillabaisse for you to discover and savor. Paddle, sail, visit a museum, shop in style, rent a convertible, drop the top, slip on your sunglasses, be a celebrity and live life Miami-style. Sway to the tropical rhythms and warm ocean breezes that are so much a part of this fabulous city by the sea.

Our friendly residents of South Florida invite you to be a part of SIZZLE 2004, the largest African-American and Latino gay/lesbian event to hit the Southeast Coast.

Portions of the proceeds from this event will be donated to URBAN Soul Squad. URBAN Soul Squad is a non-profit program of The United Foundation for AIDS steadily at work in the fight against HIV and AIDS, a disease that's destroying lives, families and our communities. URBAN Soul Squad provides outreach based initiative geared towards men of color.

SIZZLE 2004 PARTNERS

THE WHITE PARTY

HX MAGAZINE

URBANe

CLUB BOi

cocoboy.com

Cupid's cabaret.com

Clikque MAGAZINE

banjee

PURE NIGHTLIFE

Houston Splash

South Florida's PARTY 93.1 Pure Dance Channel

UFA

DIRECTIONS TO THE OFFICIAL EVENTS

1 CUPIDS MIAMI *(THURSDAY)*

1060 N.E. 79th Street Miami
305.756.2694

From I-95 Southbound
To get to Cupids Miami take I-95 to the 79th st. exit number 7 and head EAST on 79th about 2 miles we are on the right just before the causeway next to the Crab shack.

2 PURE NIGHTCLUB *(FRIDAY ONLY)*

66 SW 6th Street. Miami, Florida .
305.579.0974

From I-95 Southbound
Take the lefthanded exit 2 C for Miami Ave. Stay in the left lane which is the ramp for Miami Ave. Turn right on Miami Ave (you can only go right). Go over the draw bridge, the street curves to the right. Take the first right turn (no street light) between the two white buildings. We are the white building on the right, lots of trees and plants in the front of the building.

From Downtown
Take Miami Ave Southbound and go over the Miami River. The street curves to the right. Take the first right turn (no signal). We are the white building on the right.

3 CLUB BOI *(SATURDAY)*

726 NW 79 th St., Miami, Florida
305.836.8995

From Host Hotel / I-95 Northbound
Merge onto I-95 N. and drive for about 5.7 miles. Take the SR-934/NW 79TH ST exit- exit number 7- toward NW 81ST Turn LEFT onto NW 81ST ST/FL-934 W.Turn RIGHT onto NW 79TH ST/FL-934 E. Club is less that 1/4 mile on the left.

From Ft, Lauderdale/Hollywood / I-95 South Bound
From I-95 Take exit number 7- toward SR-934/NW 81ST ST/NW 79TH ST. Turn RIGHT onto NW 79TH ST/FL-934 E.Club is less that 1/4 mile on the left.

4 BLUE CAFE *(SUNDAY ONLY)*

18290 Collins Avenue (A1A), Sunny Isles

From I-95 North Bound
Take SR-826 Going East towards the beach. Then drive about 5.3 miles. Turn Left on Collins Avenue (FL-A1A). Make a U-Turn at 183rd Street Club will be on the Right.

From I-95 South Bound
Take Ives Dairy Biscayne Blvd then make a RIGHT. Pass Aventura Mall and then make a LEFT at Lehman Causeway to Collins Ave (A1A). Make a RIGHT on Collins. Club will be 1/2 Mile on the right

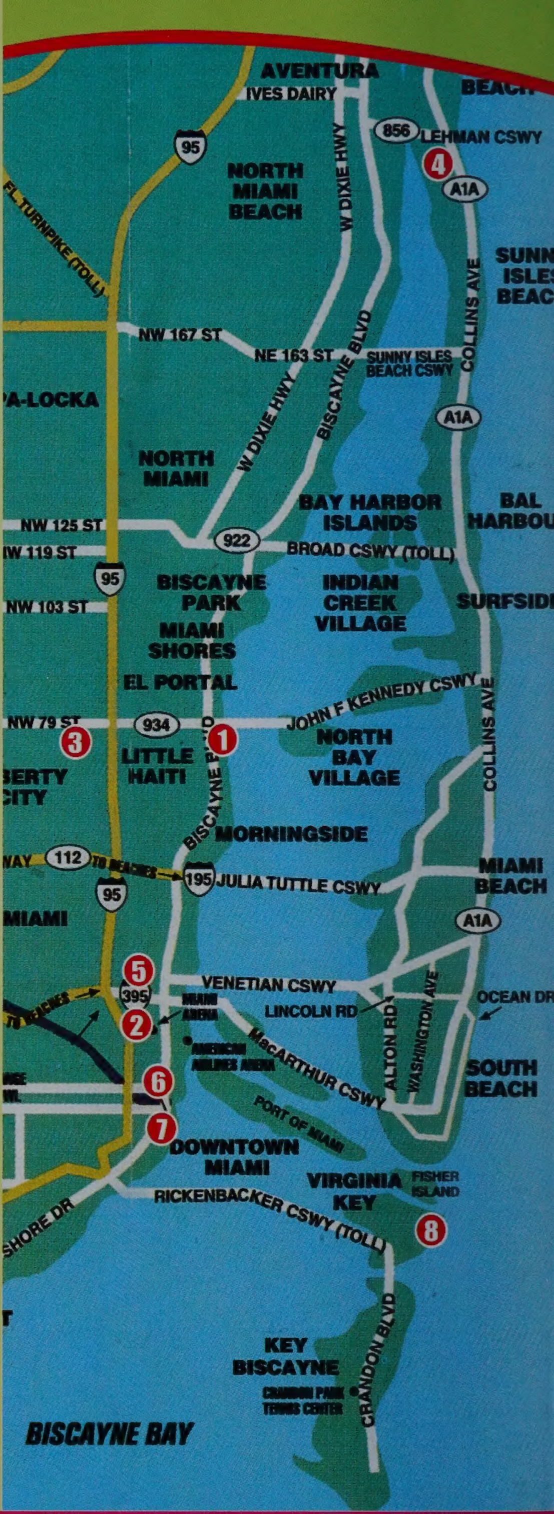
5 I/O NIGHTCLUB *(MONDAY)*

30 NE 14th Street . Downtown Miami, Florida .
305.358-8007

From Host Hotel
Start out going north on BRICKELL AVE/US-1 N Turn LEFT onto NE 14TH ST

From I-95 Southbound
From I-95 S Take the I-395 exit- exit number 5- on the left toward MIAMI BEACH.Take the N.E. 2ND AVE. exit- exit number 2A- toward US-1/BISCAYNE BLVD.Take the NE 2ND AVE ramp. Turn RIGHT onto NE 11TH ST. Turn RIGHT onto NE 1ST AVE. Turn LEFT onto NE 14TH ST.

THE ABOVE ARE THE ONLY OFFICIAL VENUES (DATES) THAT ARE AFFILIATED WITH SIZZLE. WE ARE THE ORIGINATOR OF THESE MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND PARTIES DOWN HERE IN MIAMI — BE AWARE OF THE IMPOSTORS — DON'T END-UP AT THE WRONG FUNCTION!

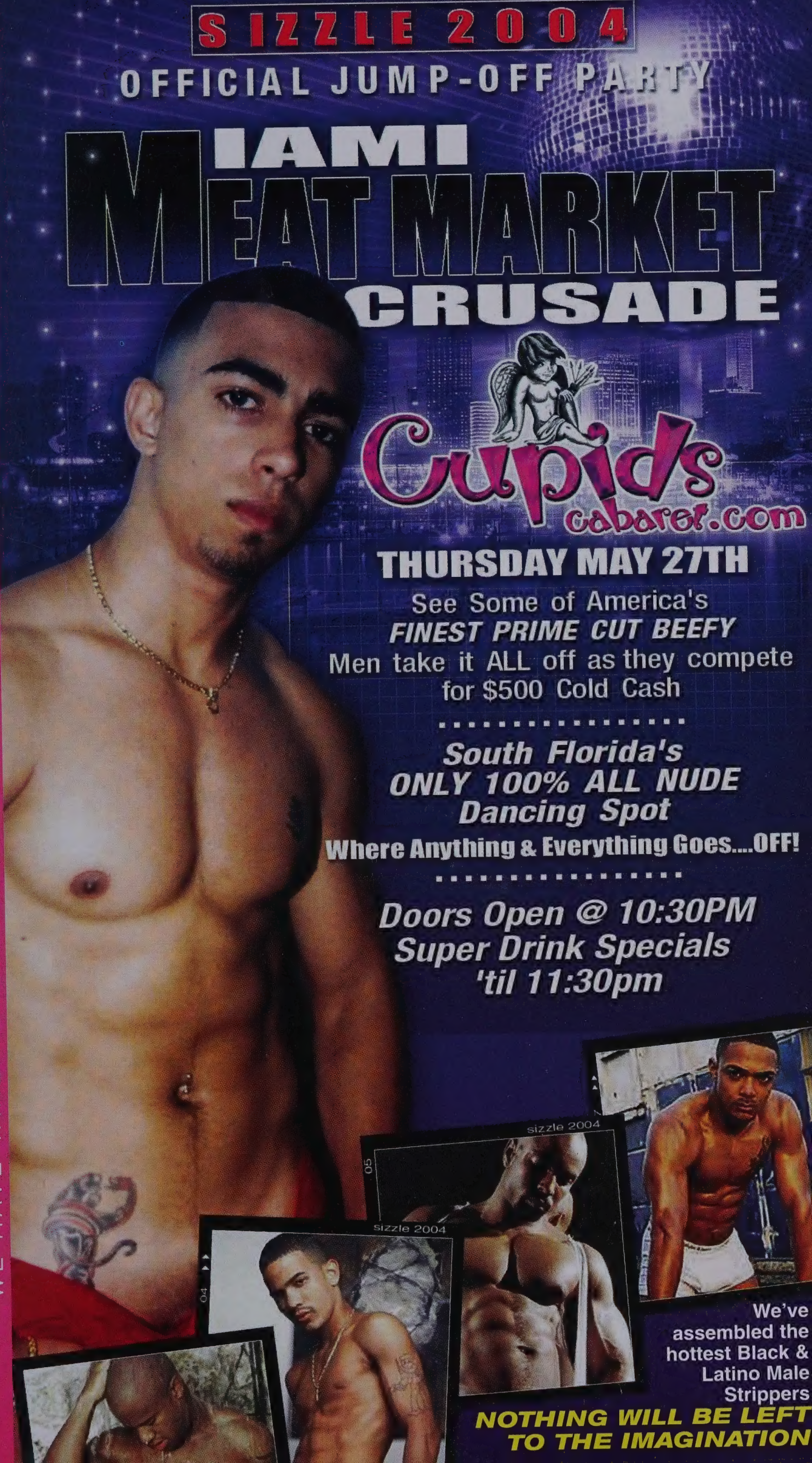

AVENTURA
IVES DAIRY
95
856
LEHMAN CSWY
4
A1A
NORTH MIAMI BEACH
W DIXIE HWY
FL TURNPIKE (TOLL)
SUNN ISLES BEAC
COLLINS AVE
NW 167 ST
NE 163 ST
BISCAYNE BLVD
SUNNY ISLES BEACH CSWY
A-LOCKA
A1A
W DIXIE HWY
NORTH MIAMI
BAY HARBOR ISLANDS
BAL HARBOU
NW 125 ST
922
BROAD CSWY (TOLL)
W 119 ST
95
BISCAYNE PARK
INDIAN CREEK VILLAGE
SURFSID
NW 103 ST
MIAMI SHORES
EL PORTAL
JOHN F KENNEDY CSWY
NW 79 ST
934
3
1
NORTH BAY VILLAGE
COLLINS AVE
LITTLE HAITI
BISCAYNE BLVD
ERTY CITY
MORNINGSIDE
WAY
112
TO BEACHES
195
JULIA TUTTLE CSWY
95
MIAMI BEACH
MIAMI
A1A
5
395
VENETIAN CSWY
MIAMI ARENA
LINCOLN RD
OCEAN DR
TO BEACHES
2
AMERICAN AIRLINES ARENA
MacARTHUR CSWY
ALTON RD
WASHINGTON AVE
SOUTH BEACH
6
PORT OF MIAMI
7
DOWNTOWN MIAMI
VIRGINIA KEY
FISHER ISLAND
RICKENBACKER CSWY (TOLL)
SHORE DR
8
CRANDON BLVD
KEY BISCAYNE
CRANDON PARK TENNIS CENTER
BISCAYNE BAY

Online: www.sizzle2004.com email: mail@sizzle2004.com Contact: 954-987-8637

daTake-Over

WE HAVE TAKEN OVER THE FABULOUS CUPIDS CABARET FOR *ONE NIGHT ONLY*

1 CUPIDS MIAMI *(THURSDAY)*
1060 N.E. 79th Street Miami
305.756.2694



SIZZLE 2004

OFFICIAL JUMP-OFF PARTY

MIAMI MEAT MARKET CRUSADE

Cupids cabaret.com

THURSDAY MAY 27TH

See Some of America's
FINEST PRIME CUT BEEFY
Men take it ALL off as they compete
for $500 Cold Cash

……

South Florida's
ONLY 100% ALL NUDE
Dancing Spot
Where Anything & Everything Goes....OFF!

……

Doors Open @ 10:30PM
Super Drink Specials
'til 11:30pm

We've
assembled the
hottest Black &
Latino Male
Strippers

NOTHING WILL BE LEFT TO THE IMAGINATION

SIZZ

MEMORIAL DAY W
MAY 27
WWW.SIZ

THURSDAY MAY 27th
SIZZLE 2004 Official Jump-off Party

MIAMI MEAT MARKET CRUSADE

AWESOME NEW SPOT - ACQUIRED JUST FOR ONE NIGHT
@ Cupids Nightclub - 1060 N.E. 79th Street Miami.
The Party Starts Under A huge Party Tent Outside
and Flows Inside This Awesome Facility.
Yes This Is The Sizzle 2004 Event For The Bois While
The Ladies will be at the Colesium
See some of America's Finest Prime Cut Beefy
Men take it all of as they compete for $500 cold cash.
• South Florida's Only 100% All Male Nude Dancing
Spot... Where Anything & Everything Goes... OFFFF!
Doors Open @ 10:30PM
Super drink specials til 11:30pm

FRIDAY MAY 28th
Sizzle 2004 Presents

ONE MIGHTY BOI PARTY

Starring A Parade Of Sizzling GoGo Dancers along with **1500 of the nation's sexiest men**.
@ Miami's newest and sexiest party spot - Pure Nightclub Located at 66 SW 6th Street . Miami,
You'll be stunned by the ambiance, glitz and glitter / **3 Huge Dance Areas:**
Hip-Hop, Reggae on the main floor by DJ Gavin T / House on "The Roof" overlooking the Beautiful
Miami Skyline / Calypso, Meringue & Soca on The "Patio" You aren't ready for this shit?
-18 to party 21 to drink / Doors open @ 10:30pm until 6am

SATURDAY MAY 29th (Day Event)
Clikque Magazine Presents

ONE MIGHTY LUAU & POOL PARTY (PART 1)

-**$250 Sizzling Body Contest** / Music, Food, Drinks, Body Contest, Model Search,
Trivia Games, Lots Of Door Prizes, T-shirts, Giveaway and more.
@ Host Hotel Sheraton Biscayne Bay Hotel 495 Brickell Ave.,
(We've secured the entire pool area just for you,
so It's OK to come on OUT!)
Doors Open from 3PM - Until 8PM

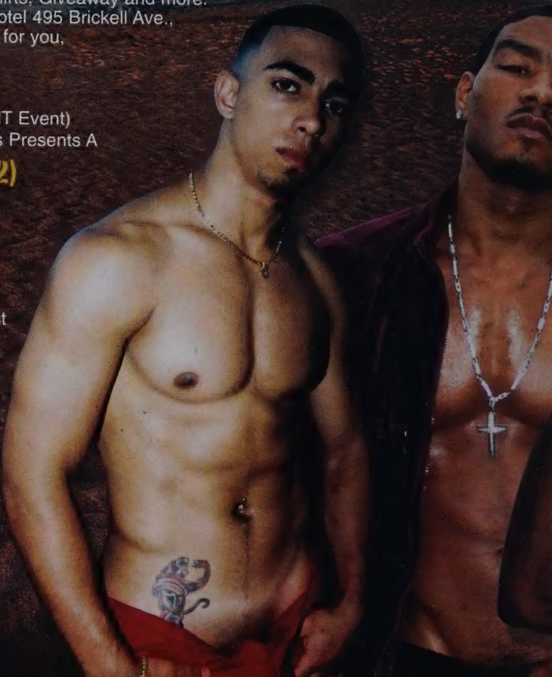
SATURDAY MAY 29th (NIGHT Event)
Miami's Hottest Nightspot For The Fellas Presents A

SIZZLING BOI LUAU (PART 2)

@ Club Boi, 728 BW 79th Street
-Expect many prizes and surprises
plus a house load of Sexy Dancers
-2 levels of excitement along with
an extended patio deck
-VIP Open Bar (House Brands)
Come and Jam with South Florida"s Best
DJ GAVIN T and guest DJs

Come experience Sexy Saturdays
@ Club Boi

FREE BUFFET ALL NIGHT
-18 to party 21 to drink
-Doors open @ 10:00pm until



LE2004

EEKEND IN MIAMI

H-31ST

2004.COM

SUNDAY MAY 30th
SIZZLE 2004 Presents

BEACH BALL 1

South Florida largest Black & Latino beach party
SUN, SAND & HE - Come join in the celebration
1st Annual $250 Wet Trunk Contest.
Lots of Fun games, Caribbean food, Drinks
FREE FOR ALL
Hosted on dazzling Virginia Key Beach
Virginia Key across the Reckenbacker Causeway
2pm until 8PM

SUNDAY MAY 30th
Banjee Magazine Presents

SEX ON THE BEACH (PART 7)

@ The Blue Cafe - 18290 Collins Avenue, Sunny Isles
If you weren't there last year, you had betta ask somebody!
-**Still The Best Party In Miami**... Ever!
-Starring The Sexy Models From Banjee Magazine.
Headlining Mysteek, Unique, Saint, Jay Ryder plus K-Rock, Caramel,Bombay and a host of other dancers **DANCE,SWEAT, FLIRT, SCORE!**
1200 bois + 1 Room = You Do The Math! (Extended lounge areas added for the overflow)
Located in fabulous Sunny Isles across the street from the new Donald Trump Sonesta Hotel, the Blue Cafe is the areas sexiest and hottest nightlife party spot.

MONDAY MAY 31st
Sizzle 2004 Presents

MIAMI HEAT DA FINALE

@ I/O Nightclub, Downtown Miami 30 NE 14th Street
Come and Experience the Sizzling sounds of Miami for one last time.
VIBE in this HOT NEW CLUB in Downtown Miami. Tonight it's all about the music.
When the action becomes to much for you to handle, cool down in our super large Garden
@ HOT SEXY ROOMS, SUPER LARGE VIDEO MONITORS

TRAVEL INFORMATION

HOST HOTEL

Sheraton Biscayne Bay HOTEL

495 Brickell Ave., Miami FL
RESERVATIONS NUMBER
Code: 4806 / Sizzle 2004
305-373-6000

OVERFLOW HOTEL:
HYATT REGENCY MIAMI
400 SE 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL
RESERVATIONS NUMBER
Code: SIZZLE TEL: 800-633-7313

AIR TRAVEL

DELTA AIRLINES	
Code: 990006-A	800-241-6760
AMERICAN AIRLINES	
Code: 945AB	800-433-1790
CONTINENTAL AIRLINES	
Code: UGERY3	800-468-7022

GROUND TRAVEL

AVIS CAR RENTAL	
Code: J660074	800-331-1600
ALAMO CAR RENTAL	
Code: 303284 GR	800-732-3232
Greyhound	800-231-2222
Amtrak Railways	800-872-7245
Tri Rail	800-874-7245

Public transportation is available. Call 305-263-5400 for more information. Transit maps wil be provided for you at the host hotel.

The hotel doesn't provide an airport shuttle. A one-way fare from the Miami International Airport to hotels is approximately $19-20

If you are staying on South Beach, know that travel time to downtown during the hours between 10PM and 3AM can sometime take 45minutes to an hour during the Memorial Day Holiday. The average time for this commute is normally 5-7 minutes.

ALL EVENTS WILL GO OFF AS PLANNED — RAIN OR SHINE.

The organizers reserve the right to record, both on film and audio tape, people who attend any Sizzle 2004 event. No compensation, financial or otherwise will be offered.

Unless prior written permission is obtained from the organizers of Sizzle 2004, commercial enterprise on or around events is forbidden.

Participation at any Sizzle 2004 event is entirely at the risk of the persons attending.

Persons behaving in an aggressive manner will be immediately ejected without reimbursement.

You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in Sizzle 2004.

Sizzle 2004 is a drug-free, zero tolerance event. No drugs or illegal substance of any kind are allowed, permitted, or tolerated at any of our events.

The organizers of this event reserve the right to refuse admission to any event at any time. The organizers reserve the right to change time, venues, and events of Sizzle 2004 without prior notification.

SIZZLE2004

YOU'VE GOT OPTIONS

We have 4 different Types of VIP Cards. One's Sure To Accommodate Your Needs

THE ULTIMATE CARD

(Thursday - Monday)
VIP Admission To All 5 Nightclub Parties
For Only **$120.00**

THE PREMIUM CARD

(Friday - Monday)
VIP Admission To 4 Nightclub Parties
For Only **$100.00**

THE WEEKEND PLEASER

(Friday - Sunday)
VIP AdmissionTo 3 Nightclub Parties
For Only **$80.00**

THE GETAWAY CARD

(Fri-Sat or Sat-Sun)
VIP Admission To 2 Nightclub Parties
For Only **$60.00**

ALL VIP CARD HOLDERS WILL RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING

- FREE Admission To Luau/Pool Party ($15 Value) on Saturday
- FREE Sizzle 2004 T-Shirt
- Complimentary Welcome Packet From The City Of Miami
- VIP/Express Entrance To All Events
- Access To VIP/Express Drink Bar @ Clubs *(No Lines)*
- Access To All Clubs VIP Areas Including VIP Lounge At Hotel
- AND MUCH,MUCH MORE!

To prevent shipping mishaps, we will hold your card for you here in Miami where you can pick it up at the host hotel or at any of our Sizzle events. Sorry, No Checks After May 10th

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED or Make Checks/Money Orders Payable TO BANJEE BOI INC.
Telephone: 954-987-8637 or 305-528-7495 Website: SIZZLE2004.COM
Mail: Banjee Boi Inc, 931 South Park Road, Suite 105, Hollywood FL 33021

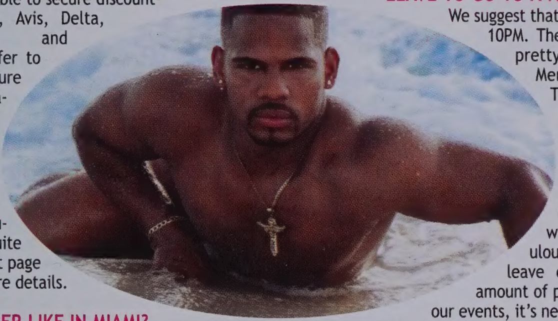
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IS SIZZLE A PRIDE EVENT?
No we are not a pride. We are about throwing the hottest, sexiest parties in the nation.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED / VOLUNTEER.
We welcome local support in an attempt to making Sizzle 2004 successful. Be it via promotions, planning and development, or working the events the week of Sizzle, we welcome your assistance. If you would like to get involved, visit the Sizzle website at www.sizzle2004.com or call 954-987-8637

IS SIZZLE WORKING WITH A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION?
Sizzle is working the Urban Soul Squad, a program of the United Foundation for AIDS. Portions of the proceeds from Sizzle will be donated to Urban Soul Squad to aid in their attempts to fight HIV/AIDS, a disease that's destroying lives, families and our communities.

ARE THERE DISCOUNTS FOR AIR AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION
Last summer we were able to secure discounted rates with Alamo, Avis, Delta, American-Airlines and Continental. Please refer to the back of this brochure for contact and reservations information.



IS THERE A VIP CARD AVAILABLE TO THE EVENTS?
Yes! There are four actually. One is sure to suite your needs. See the last page of this brochure for more details.

WHAT'S THE WEATHER LIKE IN MIAMI?
Sun, sun and yes more sun. Seriously, it does rain in Miami. However, not for a long period of time. The average high is 86 degrees and the low is 71 degrees. For you girls that like to flaunt the furs; not here baby!

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO STAY AT THE HOTEL?
The cost at the host hotel is $89 plus taxes and fees per night. Although the Sheraton Biscayne Bay Hotel is currently sold out, we encourage you to call and check to see if there have been any cancelations or no-shows. Otherwise our overflow hotel, the HYATT has rooms for you at the same rate each night except for Friday. Both properties provide exceptional rooms and services and are conveniently located in Downtown Miami with great access to the beaches, clubs shopping and South Beach. See the back of this brochure for reservations information.

ARE THESE PROPERTIES GAY FRIENDLY?
Both the Sheraton and the HYATT properties are TAG Approved Accommodations. Travel Alternatives Group (TAG) Approved ® accommodations qualify by agreeing to not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in their employment practices, actively outreach to the gay & lesbian community, and strive to create a gay-friendly experience for their guests. Both hotels are aware of the Sizzle 2004 group and are excited to be hosting our event.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO I NEED FOR EVENTS?
It may not be a bad idea to bring your entire bank account. Just kidding, but as with major circuits such as DC Black Pride, At the Beach in LA, Atlanta Black Pride and Black Pride NYC, clubbing can range from $15-25 depending on the venue. Fortunately, we're not charging South Beach prices ($35+), but don't expect Sizzle events to cost less than $15. There is no charge for the Sunday's beach party (Beach Ball 1) or the BBQ on Monday.

DO I NEED TO RENT A CAR?
That actually won't be a bad idea. Although most events are relatively close to the Host hotels, you will still need a car to get around. Miami is a tourist city and cabs can cost a pretty penny.

WHAT'S CAB FARE FROM THE MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO THE SHERATON BISCAYNE BAY HOTEL?
The average cost is between $19-20 for a cab. To save, you can also share a cab with a group of tourist going in the same area. This can run you between $10-12. Transportation information is located at the Airport upon arrival.

IF I AM STAYING ON SOUTH BEACH WHEN SHOULD I LEAVE TO GO TO A NIGHT EVENT?
We suggest that you leave no later than 10PM. The causeway (I-195) gets pretty backed-up during Memorial Day Weekend. Tens of Thousands of Hip-Hoppers make their way to glitzy South beach each night. It's truly a mess. So you can either spend your evening on the causeway or at one of our fabulous Sizzling, events. Just leave early! Because of the amount of people trying to get into our events, it's never to early to get to an event.

ARE THE MALE AND FEMALE EVENTS SEPARATE?
For the exception of the day events (Pool Party, Beach Ball 1 and BBQ), all of the night events from Thursday thru Monday are separate. This brochure only list the male events. Visit our website for a listing of the female events and venues.

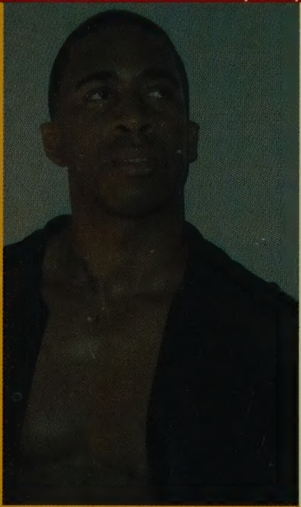
WHAT'S THERE TO DO IN THE DAYTIME.
There are literally thousands of things that you can get into in Miami - smorgasbord of entertainment and activities. Our welcome packets at the host hotel will provide you with an array of things to do while here in Miami.

WHERE ARE THERE GOOD PLACES TO SHOP?
Next to sun bathing and beaching, shopping is a favorite for most of our visitors to Miami. Like Lenox in Atlanta, Aventura Mall in Aventura is a perfect place to shop and be scene. For those of you that have a much deeper wallet, Bal Harbour Shops is a must. See shopaventuramall.com and balharbourshops.com for more information and directions or as your hotel information desk.

ARE THERE ANY CLOTHING OPTIONAL BEACHES?
I thought that you'd never ask. Yes there is actually. Haulover Beach Park provides sectioned areas were nude bathing and tanning are permitted. Located at 10800 Collins Ave0, Haulover leaves little to the imagination.

HOUSTON
YOUNG MEN SAVING MEN

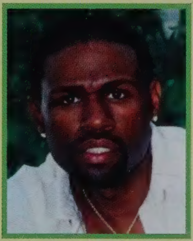
YMSM is a community empowerment project of the Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation.



YMSM provides you and your partner with:

- An Opportunity to Voice Your Concerns
- Free HIV/STI Counseling and Testing
- Safer Sex Education
- Peer Counseling
- Risk Reduction Education
- Referral Services
- Depression Counseling
- Self Esteem Development
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness
- Decision Making/Partner Negotiation
- Prevention Case Management
- Leadership Training
- Social and Recreational Activities
- Volunteer Opportunities
- A Safe Social Environmen

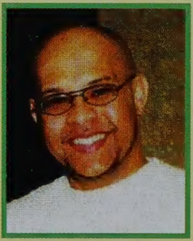
Your Team Of Dedicated Community Workers



The Director of the YMSM program,

DR. GEORGE SMITH

J.D. (2004 Candidate), is a native Houstonian. He received his B. B.A. in Marketing and a Masters of Arts in Sociology from Prairie View A&M University. In addition he received his Ph.D. in Public Administration with an emphasis in Health Service Management from Columbus University. On May 14, 2004 he receives his Juris Doctorate of Law specializing in Health and Entertainment Law from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University. Dr. Smith is responsible for the overall direction of the program, operation systems, policies and procedures, and quality assurance. George's fervor for HIV/STD prevention among Black gay men comes from his belief that more educated top level executives need to extend their knowledge, know-how, and business savvy to community based organizations (CBO) and programs like YMSM, a Project of Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation. Less than two percent of the American population will attain a PH.D and a J.D. He believes that CBO's need well educated individuals to provide leadership and structure to enable the organization to be effective in delivering services to their targeted community. The responsibility of being a father to his six year old son, George II, a mentor to the young men on his staff as well as others in the community and divine intervention is what led George to Donald R. Watkins and the YMSM Project. George jumped at the chance to put the words he preached so often into application. He wants YMSM to be an example for the Black community and the African American men who have sex with men (AAYMSM) community in Houston as well as a model program for other projects similar to YMSM across the country. For the future, George wants to continue to lead the YMSM program proficiently, successfully and with much love. He also wants to donate his time and experience to do pro bono work for persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as continue his career as a health care consultant.



W. JEFFREY CAMPBELL - YMSM Coordinator is gifted with a voice that demands attention, he has lived in Houston for the past 15 years. Jeffrey is a graduate of Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, TX with a B.B.A. in Accounting, and is a certified teacher in the State of Texas. In 2003 Jeffrey, a licensed and ordained minister founded Fresh Start Church. The mission of Fresh Start is to create a safe place for all people to enter into an intimate relationship with God. He is currently working on a Masters of Divinity at Houston Graduate School of Theology. Jeffrey's motivation to work in the field of HIV prevention is generated by his belief that the African American community will continue to loose the battle against HIV/AIDS until the Black church lifts an educated and compassionate voice promoting prevention and healing. As the newest YMSM staff member, going one month strong, he sees the YMSM staff as an effective conglomeration of different personalities and diverse backgrounds that work together for the greater good of the AAYMSM community. The diversity of this staff allows the staff to have its hand on the pulse of the AAYMSM community. According to Jeffrey, "that is what makes a program work!" Jeffrey's job description calls for him to monitor all YMSM activities on a daily basis, represent the program at community events, conduct process evaluations to ensure that the programs goals and objective are being met, etc. Jeffrey realizes that his appointment as the YMSM Project Coordinator is divine

YMSM Drop-In Center, 1403 Wheeler, Houston, Texas 77004
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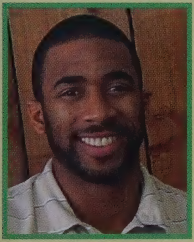
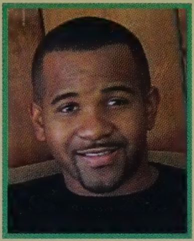
intervention and creates a greater opportunity for his powerful and charismatic voice to be heard. For Fresh Start Church, Jeffrey believes that a ministry's effectiveness is not measured by the congregation's size; instead it is measured by the ministry's positive impact on the community. For YMSM, Jeffrey wants the program to motivate a change in unsafe and self-destructive behaviors among young Black males struggling with their sexuality and empower these men to live healthier lives, physically, mentally and spiritually.

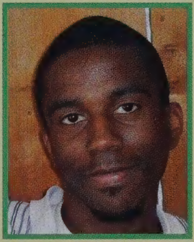
KENTWAN (KEN) HUBERT, the Community Involvement Coordinator, the one everyone knows, hails from Waco, TX. He moved to Houston in 1996 to attend Texas Southern University. His introduction into this field of work was the effect of feeling suicidal after catching his fist boyfriend and his first love, an older man cheating. A friend referred him to a Health Educator who helped Ken get through his heartache and alleviated his disdain for love and relationships. Soon after, Ken became a Health Educator with a twist: his target audience was AAYMSM. He spoke to young Black guys about coming out, positive life outlooks, being black and gay, and HIV/STD prevention. Ken, a former Page Parks model, has six years of experience in the HIV prevention arena. Renowned for his hilarious personality and long thin frame, Ken embraces the youthful, buoyant, and jovial spirit of YMSM; when he's in the office, the day just seems to fly by. His drive comes from seeing the effect HIV has had on friends and family. Ken loves his job at the YMSM Drop-In Center, which encompasses internet intervention, participation in city and county wide HIV prevention and care planning processes, and facilitating the YMSM monthly Advisory Task Force meetings. Ken's ultimate goal is to one day be the Executive Director of a Black and gay non-profit organization.



JAMES BROUSSARD, the Prevention Case Manager, the bright one, is from Lafayette, LA. He received a B.S. in Biology from Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans in 2002. After exchanging medical school for some life and real world experience, he moved to Houston for a fresh start post-college graduation. He was initially hired as the Media Coordinator for the YMSM program. Curiosity, intrigue, and a love for gay men were the main derivatives that led him to YMSM. Everything about YMSM was new to James. He had never seen, spoken to, or touched a person with HIV (or a least a person he knew for a fact was positive). As of February 2004, he has been YMSM's Prevention Case Manager, a position which has James face to face with young black HIV positive males everyday. Everyday, he goes home feeling as though he has really made a difference in the life of a gay Black man; this means a lot to him. His job entails identifying and screening clients, assessing their service needs (e.g. HIV/STD health care needs, adherence to HIV/STD treatment, substance abuse, mental and emotional health, housing/living arrangements, benefits/income, barriers to services, clients strengths, etc), developing a service plan based on clients' needs, provide information, referrals, and assistance with linkages to HIV/STD prevention and medical and psychosocial services. James is currently applying to medical school and hopes to one day be a primary care physician in a position of authority that will allow his love for black men and gay men (especially black gay men) to overflow into the community



DARRELL COLONE, the Data Collection Specialist, the quiet one, has been in Houston since 1999. He is from Beaumont, TX. Darrell is working on a business degree at Texas Southern University. Darrell came to YMSM through Kentwan, who thought he would like the data collection position. He has always been interested in numbers and percentages; math was his favorite subject as a child. Darrell's introduction to gay society had his head spinning. He was a low key country mouse thrown into a pit of fast talking big city vultures. He found himself lost in the crowd. Ken and YMSM were his saving grace. He had always been interested in HIV prevention and being involved in interventions that empower AAYMSM. Darrell has had both friends and family die from AIDS complications, and he has friends and family currently living with HIV. Darrell's position at the YMSM Drop-In Center entails conducting research activities to identify sources of information for HIV/AIDS and related topics that impact AAYMSM, assist in development and implementation of a needs assessment to identify short and long term HIV/STD prevention needs of AAYMSM. The YMSM program has seriously helped Darrell grow and mature into an intelligent young Black man; he is no longer the frightened, naïve gazelle trapped in a cave surrounded by a pack of back stabbing hyenas. Hands-on experience is what Darrell attributes to his current knowledge and understanding of this field of work.



QUINCY SOILEAU, the Community Outreach/Communications Specialist, the one who goes above and beyond the call of duty, is a native Houstonian and has three years of experience in the AAYMSM HIV/STD prevention field at the age of 23. He actually grew up in the Third Ward area where the YMSM Drop-In Center is presently located. He moved to Dallas in 2002 for a change of pace and a fresh start in a new city. An outreach worker passing out condoms at a club sparked his interest in HIV prevention, and after volunteering for a few weeks, he became a Community Outreach/Health Educator for Renaissance III (a program in Dallas similar to YMSM). Quincy met Ken, YMSM's social butterfly, at a conference in Cleveland and found out about the program for AAYMSM in his hometown. He moved back to Houston for school and began volunteering at YMSM. Quincy's motivation comes from seeing the positive effects his work has had on people. He is a natural giver and attains an uplifting sense of gratification and peace of mind from helping others. Growing up with a tracheotomy, Quincy endured and survived the harsh and cruel teasing and ridicule that children dish out; YMSM has made him an even stronger person because he realizes that whatever he goes through, there is someone out there whose problems make his look like a warm apple pie. Quincy's responsibilities include coordinating community outreach at various locations where AAYMSM hang out, to advocate on behalf of AAYMSM to decrease service gaps, to implement social marketing activities that YMSM put into practice in the community, etc. A big kid at heart, Quincy doesn't know what the future has in store for him; he does however know that he plans on working as hard as possible to make YMSM a force to be reckoned with in Houston.

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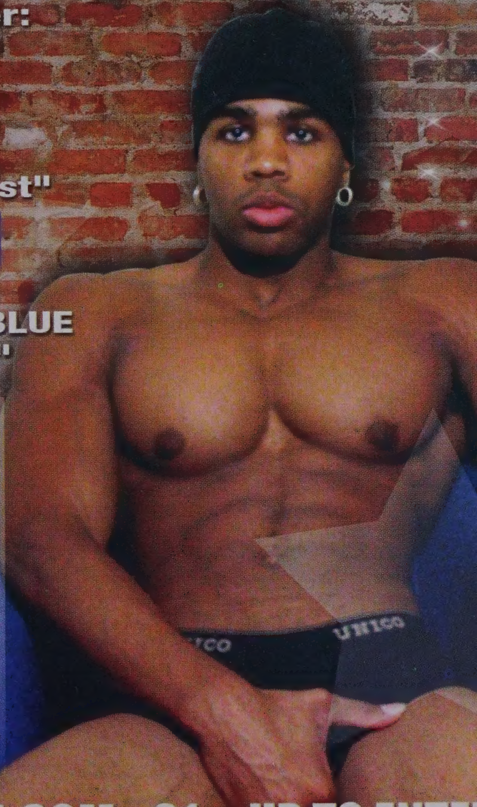

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BIANCA FROM PAGE 26

it from me, it really isn't so bad being talked about; try being ignored where ever you go and see how that feels.
love Bianca.

Dear Bianca,
I thought I had gotten over my ex a while back but now I am not sure. I have dated since we broke up but I am still not into a committed relationship. My problem is this. My best friend and I debated the issue of whether or not to read his diary that he had left behind at my house after he decided to leave. It has been a year since he left and I won the debate over the issue of, to read or not to read and so we ended up reading the damn diary. Our findings were mystifying and unbelievable. This man got fucked in parks, under bridges and in train stations all over town. Sometimes he claimed to have lined up a gang to bang his hole. Reading this made me sick to my stomach and all the hatred for him came back. I thought I was over him, so why does it hurt so bad? I have tested negative for HIV since I read the diary but I still feel like kicking his ass. What am I supposed to do?
Hating him terribly in New York

Dear HHTINY,
You are probably over him but the knowledge that he had you and New York together is bound to bother you. Thank God you are still negative and double thank him that this man walked out of your life. Let the sorry moronic, asshole know that had he told you of his escapades to the park at night you would have joined him, and it would have been fun for the both of you. If you are not that kind of girl then act like you never read the diary since you really shouldn't have in the first place. Let bygones be by gones. On the other hand get a bat and I will fly to New York and help you beat that bitch with the bat. Love and Penis! Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I am in love with a crooked dick man who could not care two cahoots about me. He screws me once in a while and is always chasing other asses all over town. What do I do?
In love with the crooked dick.

Miss Gyrll,
I understand your obsession with the crooked dick. Killer has a nice crooked one that does me lovely as well.However you have a problem and you have acknowledged it. There is only one thing left for you to do and that is solve it. Next time the man comes to your house bound and gagg him and never let him leave until you have had enough to last you until he decides to come over again. love Bianca.

Dear Bianca,
I've gotten myself into a big mess and don't know what to do. About a year ago, I asked my bestfriend to hook me up with a friend of someone he was dating. Well, for too many reasons to name here, that didn't happen. Here we are a year later and as fate would have it, me and this person finally hooked up. We seemed to hit it off quite well. It's so strange and yet so perfect, the things we have in common. We spend hours on end on the telephone and have cultivated a great relationship with email. It's only natural that the sex would be intense, passionate, and over all "all that". The problem is that he's involved with someone. In fact they live together. At first, that didn't bother me because I was "beating someone else's time"; I was the "clean up man, just doing my duty". Well, here lately, I'm tired of being number 2 and I'm ready to step up to the plate and claim my riteful throne of #1. I realize I stand the chance of having my position "snatched" away, by the next big butt with a smile, but I'm enjoying the moment. He tells me to be patient, that his relationship is on a rocky course headed to hell, but now I'm having 2nd and third thoughts. Miss Bianca, answer this question without a fierce read, because I don't want to have to read your editor about promising all those boys he's going to put their picture on the cover. Working Hard & Flying Right while going crazy over the boy that DELIVERS TIME

Dear Whatever,
I don't have to read you about being ready for your rightful place in this man's life. You are already there. Second in the eyes of the world but first in his heart. Take it from me. You have it good. Ask the gyrll whose shoes you want to step into, the bullshit she has to put up with on a daily basis. She does the dishes, the laundry, etc and you get the flowers and the big mandingo dick. Shut your mouth and just swallow... your pride that is. Wedding Gowns are over rated and very uncomfortable I might add.Take it form me, I have tried on and modeled many. Before Killer came along I was about to marry every man that crawled into my bed.But he taught me a very valuable lesson. As long as you are not married it is not cheating. I love it ,I love it!!! On, to the issue of my editor. Is it my editor or my publisher who keeps telling boys that they will be on the cover of the next issue? Actually I know it is my editor, but so what? If you co-owned this fierce publication, I am sure you would have to do some twenty covers per month in order no to get beaten by those promises. So don't get your stilettos caught up in your hairnet, over my editors shenanigans, just be content as number 2, isn't that were you always ranked in high school. OOOOps! my bad, at graduation that was 222.
Love Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I have recently found out that my boyfriend of seven years has been having an affair with a friend of ours for the past year and I am going to leave his ass. As soon as I can find a place to live I am out of here. I am sick of his shit and his playing me like this. He pays the bills , does the laundry sometimes, cooks and the sex is good, but why did he have to do this to me. I hate him and I am outa here. That no good son of a bitch is going to miss me and pay dearly for what he has done to me.
No one treats Josephina like shit and gets away with it.

Dear Josephina,
I know that is not your name but that is okay. Sounds to me like you are the one who is going to miss him and I don't see from your letter where he has treated you like shit. Sounds like you have a good man to me and you are the sorry one. The sex is good and he pays your bills, now heifer, what else on earth do you want from this man. Good dick and my bills are payed and me and killer are together forever. If he cheated for a year and you could not tell, act like you still don't know, or go find the man and your friend, Beat them both and then take your man home. If that does not work, ask this wonderful man of yours if he has time for a third girl, I am free on weekends as killer is usually out of town. Sorry to disappoint you! Love Bianca.

Dear Bianca,
I have a terrible obsession with straight men or those whom I cannot tell if they are gay or not. I live in New York and I meet these men on the train, around the corner from my job , by my house and just about anywhere I go. My problem is this. They allow me to spend money on them, we sometimes hug and they act like real gentlemen when we go out, but we never have sex and a relationship, a gay relationship never ensues. What are these men up to and how do I find out if they are gay or get them to come out. Love sick in New York.

Dear Lovesick in NY,
Girl, how are you, I know exactly who you are and your questions baffle me. On one hand, I don't know when straight men started going out to the movies and dinner with men such as yourself, who are obviously gay. And on the other hand how straight are these men if they approach you and it gets to the point where phone numbers are exchanged. I know that the kids in New York will go out with anyone who is paying as whoring in its many forms has become quite common place. My thoughts on the matter is that you are in denial. You don't really want a boyfriend, so you date straight men, because it is safe from commitment and the pressures of sex. I could be wrong but girl, go find you a gay boy and get some dick, sounds like you need it real bad. Love Bianca

Bianca

Bianca is interested in helping you solve some of the greater mysteries of life. Write her at
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Hollywood FL 33021
Or email her C/o
Clikque1@aol.com

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GETTING YOUR MONTH OFF TO A GREAT START

ARIES

Aries- Miss Things, your ship has docked so go unload the goodies. There is so much to chose from so only take the top shelf. Let the other not so worthy ones, stay on the boat. You are pretty and sophisticated and there is a date chasing after you, only you are not taking notice. Slow down and let him ketch up.

TAURUS

Taurus- The bull in you wants to show his prowess and there is no better time. You are the only stud and can live up to anyones expectations. Go out there and let the kids know that you are here to separate the have's from the have nots. This is your time to steal the show for good.

GEMINI

Gemini- This is one ovuh month for you, as you celebrate your birthday. All your dreams will come through this month, if you want them hard enough. Just remember to be yourself and no one else. Life will be much simpler than way. Love is on the way.

CANCER

Cancer- You are so at peace with yourself that there is no stopping you. You will shine and excel at all the things you put your mind to. This is your drama and remember that most of the people in it, are not even supporting actors but extras. Treat them as such. That ex flame of yours is hot on your trail. Everyone finds you irresistible so please don't settle.

LEO

Leo- The world is yours, sugar. You are sweet but firm and this trait of yours is about to pay off big time. The lover in you is about to pull all stops and that man or woman will be eating out of your palms this month.

VIRGO

Virgo- So you took the big plunge and woke up in yet another relationship. Be careful and pace yourself. You may have a good thing going but only time will tell. Have fun while you can. Sometimes all that glitters is gold. Stay focussed.

LIBRA

Libra- This is your month and let no one tell you otherwise. In this version of the play you are the lead and sole actress. Do not let anyone steal your starring role nor your joy. It was meant for you, so take it and have a blast. Lovers are all wanting a piece of your success be careful with whom you share it.

SCORPIO

Scorpio- Stop wanting every man or piece of ass that passes by you. Take care of your business at home because you are on the man hunt and so is he. One day you two will meet in the park behind a bush, and there may be a cat fight. So, slow down and stick with the one you really want to be with.

SAGITTARIUS

Sagittarius- Lovely ones, you are about to explode and there is nothing in this world that can change that. You have done your homework, paid your dues and success is all yours for the taking. Just don't let some silly ass queen or dyke stop you from achieving those goals and things you have been working so hard on all this time. Be happy!

CAPRICORN

Capricorn- My precious ones. You tell a small lie and it has big consequences. People will brand you a liar if they catch you just once. The truth will set you free and besides, it is your life to do as you please, no matter what that other girl thinks. If you did it, admit it and they will just have to get over it. You are the best and they will still come chasing after you, after all is said and done.

AQUARIUS

Aquarius- Despite minor set backs your relationship is still in tact. Your creative abilities on and off the stage are being recognized. You are a star and despite the fact that you like to keep low keyed you still crave that spotlight. You are all that and then some and soon the world will know.

PISCES

Pisces- Dahling, you are a man/woman magnet. Everyone wants a piece of you but it is up to you who will get it. Be discriminate as all are not worthy. Have you noticed how lately everyone, even those who used to not see you are now trying to sleep with you. This month is yours, so have all you want but remember to play safe and skip the rif raf.

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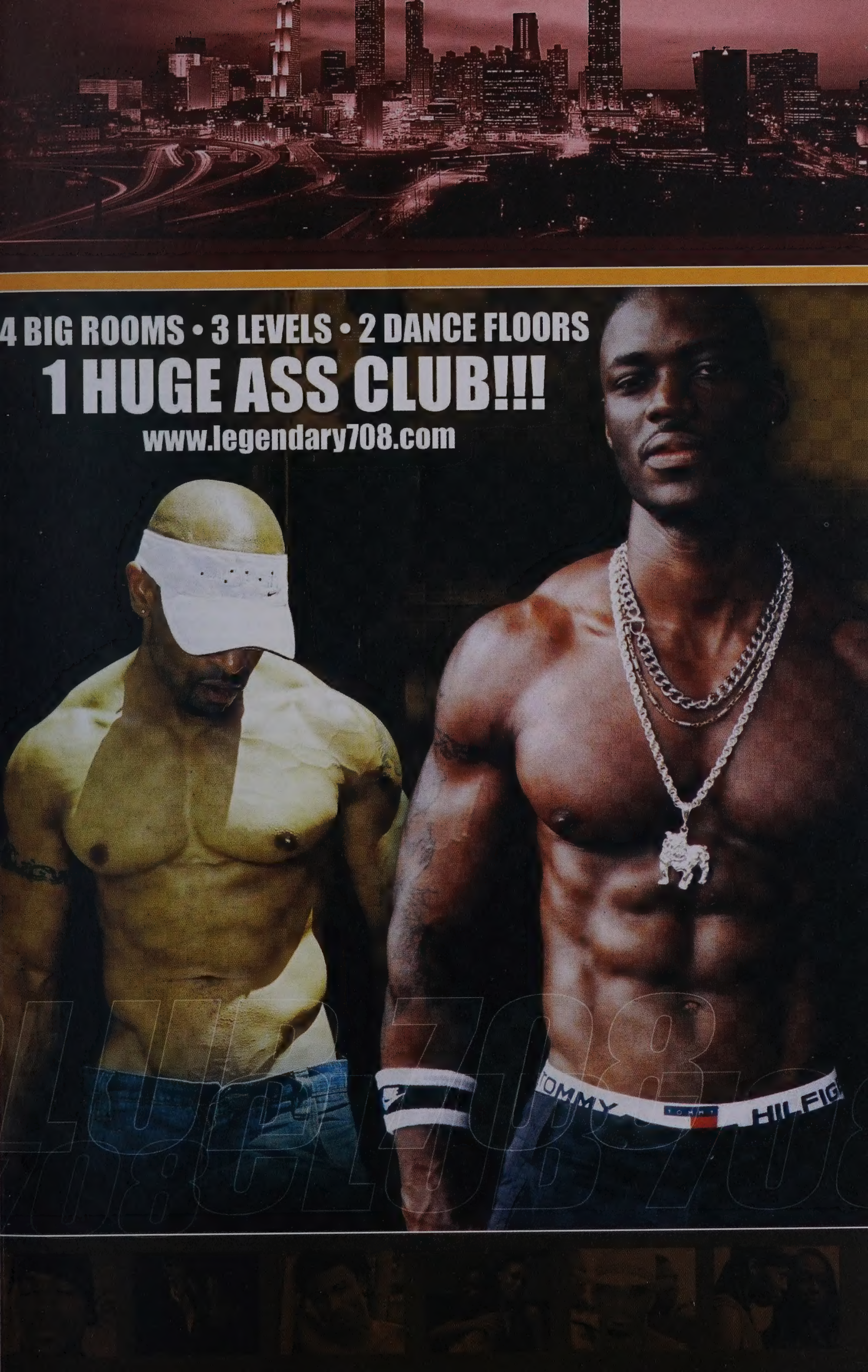
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By CRAIG WASHINGTON

The Religious Wrong

"People want truth or nothing at all. People want sincerity, security and nothing false!" from "What Can I Do For You" as performed by Labelle

When I look back over my childhood, I can truly say that religion was not an integral part of my family "culture." It really was not our way of doing things. In fact, I never attended a regular service until I was 17 years old. I remember neighbors would tease us on those rare occasions when we headed for hallowed ground. "Must be a wedding or a funeral! "Lord, the Washingtons are going to church. I know it's gonna rain!" My parents often laughed right back at them. They freely admitted to the absence of that tradition in our home as they were not ashamed about their nonconformist stance.

As a young man, I came to understand that my identity as a same-gender-loving being, that is a non-heterosexual, had placed me as an outsider at the gates of any black church in America. I realized that this identity and the resulting social location necessitated that I take some stance either in opposition or deference to the cultural status quo. It is the wretched choice of the oppressed either to deny your essence in order to be accepted for what you are not, which is to die; or to accept the godforsaken lot they have offered your kind, which is to live a non-life, or to redefine yourself demanding recognition from those who have not a name for what you are, which is to live fully in the bulls eye of fear and ignorance. Perhaps my parent's non-compliance afforded me a critical eye, the wherewithal to interrogate any who dared question my right to be. This vision enabled me to distinguish open spirituality and full inclusion from elitist religiosity and rigid hierarchy. I often wonder if my parents had any inkling that they were raising not only a black homosexual (of this I'm sure there was ample evidence) but also a homosexual activist, that is, one who replies "who are you to ask why am I?"

But before long, you may find me in front of the MARTA 5-points station, clanging a cowbell to herald the apocalypse. I guess I am just a middle-aged black gay man on the verge. A president my country did not elect has wasted millions of dollars and hundreds of young lives for an unjustified war and still stands a good chance of being legitimately elected for the first time. He has improved his odds by outdoing his father in playing a nation's bigotry, switching mugshots of big black boogey-

Mr. Washington was lovingly raised by Anna and Leon Washington in Queens, New York and has lived in Atlanta for 11 years. His writings have been published in Clikque, Venus, Arise, Washington Blade, Southern Voice, Atlanta Voice, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, He currently serves as the Volunteer and Training Coordinator for Positive Impact, which provides mental health services for people affected by HIV. He can be reached at cwash360@cs.com.

man like Willie Horton with wedding portraits of battymen and dykes with U-Hauls dragging soda cans. His Georgia cohorts have dutifully followed orders in working the same ruse throughout this ex-Confederate state. Want to wag the dog by keeping questioning citizens of all races off the unmistakable scent of your mendacity? Create a diversionary threat to that which they hold dearest: exclusive privilege. Want to pass budget cuts that rescind healthcare for thousands of women and children in Georgia while no one's looking? Follow the leader. And while you're at it, you can coax black church leadership to hold hands with racist white conservatives at the common grounds of their gay burning bonfire.

Ironies within ironies replicate as majority groups clutch their day pearls at the thought of minorities gaining access to the freedom and power they once had to themselves. The shrill cacophony of homophobic black people and the religious wrong has blended into a harmonious chorus of arrogant indignation. Many heterosexual blacks gag at comparisons between homophobia and racism, and those between civil rights and gay rights as if blacks were the America's only oppressed group who in turn created the only legitimate civil rights movement. Meanwhile the religious right defines the separation of church and state as erasing God from our lives, their God that is, whom they assert is the only God. Trust and believe that these saints are not fighting to have Jewish, Buddhist, or Muslim edicts etched across the walls of government buildings. They are striving for a Christian theocracy in which they can legally subjugate hell bound sinners using the same scripturalism that supported slavery and outlawed interracial marriage.

As "The Passion of the Christ" raises accusations about who killed the incarnate deity, it is the Christian zealots who are obliterating his spirit, by rebuking his principles of agape love which, by the way, doesn't mean love only those who look, prey and screw exactly like you. With all respect to gay and

CONTINUES ON PAGE 46

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By CRAIG WASHINGTON

METH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

other Christian reformists, I sometimes wonder why they petition the very pastors and popes who have maligned Christianity, those who then blame the damage on the people they ostracize. If the majority of churches have become social clubs that are more passionate about rooting out sin then building an inclusive gospel, then why not let them be that? We who wish to really learn how to emulate Christ (or any other spiritual teacher who showed people how to love) would do better to create our own churches, temples, schools or covens.

Yesterday's civil rights movement drew heavily from a deep well of black theology inspired by the souls of black folk. We knew all too well the dehumanizing effects of discrimination. We knew that despite the overwhelming odds, we were right and God was on our side. And the church provided a home base for that movement. But our challenges have changed dramatically over the past forty years. The class divide between privileged and poor blacks has entangled our communities in the cross wires of complacency and nihilism. As the visionary bell hooks so eloquently signifies, "Many of the material gains generated by militant anti-racist struggle have had little positive impact...for the revolution from within that is the foundation on which we build self-love and love of others has not taken place." We now struggle in absence of a galvanizing love-based movement capable of addressing our needs as blacks in America. Racism is not our only threat yet seems to be the one reliable stimulus to which blacks respond. There are roaring black silences in the face of domestic violence and rape of black women, the erasure of the poor and homeless, the enslavement of black men in the prison-industrial complex and the scorn heaped upon black lgbt people.

When will we raise our standards about the places where we worship and learn, to build this love movement of which hooks speak? Would a rabble rouser like Christ, or any other activist educator support the plethora of black churches that invest in separating so many from the fold? Then why do we? Politicians and media continue to revere the church as the primary site of sociopolitical power in Black America. I believe the church relinquished that role decades ago. Like the Democratic Party they blindly support, far too many black church leaders pander to the lowest common denominator rather than risk taking a stand that may be opposed by the majority in the polls or the pulpits. When we stop begging for acceptance from demagogues who quote scripture out of the context of principle then we change the conversation and unleash our power. As Baldwin prophesied, "Your crown is already bought and paid for. All you must do is put it on your head." There are progressive pastors, Yoruba priests, and leaders of other faiths among us who have transformative messages we need to hear. We who are black and transgendered and bisexual and gay and lesbian have infinite lessons to teach our people and the rest of the world. Let us utilize the power of our own stories of anguish and triumph. Let us settle for nothing less than what we deserve. Truth.

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dates: ***July 1st - 4th, 2004***

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theme: **Gods & Goddesses**

Calendar of Events

Thursday:	7:30-10:30 pm **Papyrus Spoken Word Experience**
Friday:	9:00 am-3:30 pm **Amarna Conference Series**
	12 noon-2:00 pm **Hieroglyphics Literary Café**
	6:30-10:00 pm **Akhet Welcome Reception**
Saturday:	7:00 am-dusk **Pantheon at the Water's Edge: The Beach Party!**
	10:00 pm-4:00 am **Heliopolis After Party**
Sunday:	1:00 pm-8:00 pm **Sed Festival Pool Party**

beginnings: In the summer of 1988, a group of friends decided to come together to organize and enjoy a day "at the beach" on the 4th of July. Each year, this event has grown in participants and in scope. It has become the nation's largest recognized gay pride celebration for persons of color. The Beach Party, with its attendance of approximately 10,000 persons from all over the country, is now the centerpiece for a series of events known as Los Angeles Black Pride.

Produced by the At The Beach Shorey Inc., Los Angeles Black Pride. 4745 West Slauson Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90056, 323/293-4ATB, info@atbla.com or atbla@aol.com.

John Deshler Photography

atbla.com

ARTICLE BY SCOTT BOGAN

THINKING

Recently, I received a call from a close friend of mine who wanted to inform me about two guys that we know who were in a car accident. Apparently the two were in Atlanta celebrating one of the guy's birthday. They both had been drinking and while driving home on Interstate 285 the driver ran into the back of a semi. The driver came out with a few scratches and bruises. The birthday passenger wasn't as lucky and currently remains in the hospital with brain damage. Since I received that call, all kinds of thoughts have occurred to me. I've been thinking about how precious time is and about how the decisions that we make can have life long consequences. I've been thinking about the importance of living in the moment. Lastly, I have been thinking about judgment and how it is just wasted energy.

I would be willing to bet that the majority of us have left clubs or parties having a few drinks and have made the conscious decision to drive ourselves and our friends home. I know that I have and if it were not for the grace of God I would not be typing this article. I know in my younger days I drove around Atlanta many weekend nights plastered. Even more recently, I have had more than a few drinks and drove myself home. These decisions could have had a horrible consequence for myself, people that are close to me and/or innocent people that just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I have made poor decisions in other areas of my life. I choose not to finish college. In my junior year, I decided that I hated school. In my naive superiority, I strongly felt that college wasn't a measure of intelligence but a measure of discipline (ironically, I am not that disciplined today either). After receiving a portion of an inheritance, I packed up and moved to NYC. While my lack of pedigree has not kept me from success, it certainly has kept me from realizing my full potential and I often think about where I could be if I had finished my degree. It also has had a lasting affect on my self-esteem. I realize that I am an intelligent articulate man however, often times when I am with my friends who are doctors, lawyers, etc....I honestly must say that I feel "less than". Because of this feeling, even people that know some of the deepest secrets of my heart don't know that I do not have a degree. I am amazed by the validation that you get from a piece of paper. But I made a decision. It was a decision that I can choose to change but until that happens it remains a decision that I must live with for the rest of my life.

There are times in my life where I find myself saying things like, "Why didn't I finish college?" "Why didn't I say I love you?" Or even something as simple as "Why didn't I ask that guy out?" When there is tragedy around you, you cannot help but think about the moments that have passed you by in your lifetime. Maybe that is how the saying "my life flashed before my eyes" came about. You can learn from these moments and hope that the next time you will act or react differently but you will never relive them. They are gone forever. For example, there is a guy that I met through a friend at a party one evening last summer. He and I flirted with each other the entire night. So much so that it was even obvi-

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ARTICLE BY SCOTT BOGAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48

ous to those around us that we liked each other. The problem was that neither of us wanted to act on our flirtation. The reason that I couldn't act was simply fear. I was and I am afraid of being rejected. My fear of rejection usually leaves me paralyzed and this was the case that evening. Almost a year later, I have only seen this guy once and we did flirt with one another but it just wasn't the same. The moment had passed. In my alone time, I occasionally think about him and what could have been if I lived in the moment and stepped out of my fear.

One of my first thoughts after learning about the accident was "what were they thinking?" I wondered why they got into that car and drove if they were that drunk. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I had no right to judge anyone. More importantly, what would my judging change? The fact of the matter is it was an accident and as I said before I have done the exact same thing. I have just been spared by God's grace and mercy. The problem is that we all allow the judgment of ourselves and others to rule our lives. Judgment keeps a wall around us. In the past, I have written about how people in social settings tend to place my friends and I in boxes and label us without truly knowing who we are……. and how it drives me crazy. I realized that I have done the same exact thing, and I guess because I don't make it generalized (meaning I usually have points that support my judgment) that I have justified my judging. My judging others stops right now. Well, ok I won't do it as much. After all, I'm not perfect.

I have missed out on so many moments in my life either because of my decisions, my fear or my judgment. Sometimes it was all three. My fear caused me to judge and then make a decision. I believe it was Maya Angelou who once said, "You do better when you know better." Now that I know better, I pray that I can do better! Only time will tell.

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On The Big Screen

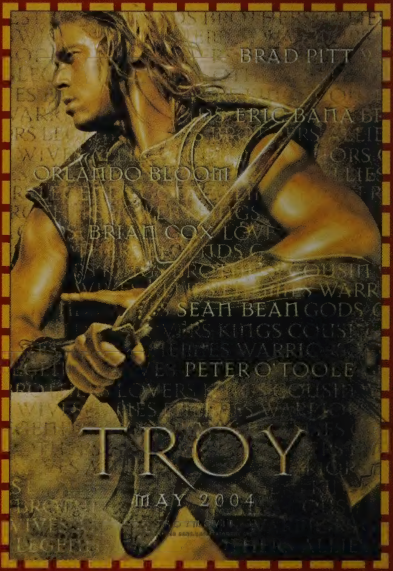
BREAKING ALL THE RULES RELEASE 5/14/04

Quincy (Jamie Foxx) gets dumped by his fiancée,, but he then writes a best-selling book advising guys to avoid heartache by breaking up with their girlfriends before they can get hurt. Quincy's cousin (Morris Chestnut) enlists him to break up with his girlfriend (Gabrielle Union) for him, but while doing so, Quincy falls for her.

TROY

RELEASE 5/14/04

Set in ancient Greece, Wolfgang Petersen's Troy is a historical epic based on The Iliad, the Greek poet Homer's account of the Trojan War. Paris (Orlando Bloom), the Prince of Troy, begins an affair with Helen (Diane Kruger), the Queen of Sparta. King Menalaus (Brendan Gleeson) takes this as a terrible insult, both to him and his brother, Agamemnon (Brian Cox), King of the Myceneans. Agamemnon unites the populations of Greece to bring Helen back from Troy. He also wants to expand his empire, and he forms an alliance with Achilles (Brad Pitt), a warrior who hungers for glory and power, to bring down the walled city, which is defended by Prince Hector (Eric Bana).



CARABIRU

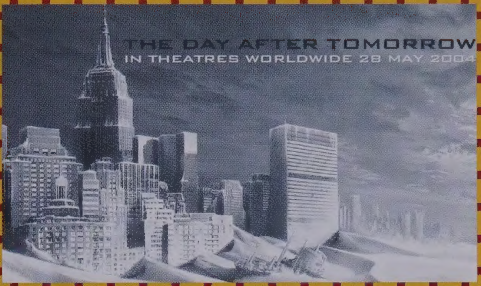
RELEASE 5/14/04

Based on a true story, Caradiru follows a social worker at a Brazilian prison who finds that the inmates are being subjected to horrible living conditions. After a rebellion, police storm the facility, killing 111 people.

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

RELEASE 5/28/04

A high-concept big-budget movie from director Roland Emmerich (Independence Day), Tomorrow is about a climatological disaster that ravages the world beyond recognition. As millions of terrified survivors try to find shelter, Professor Jack Hall (Dennis Quaid), a brilliant paleoclimatologist, heads to New York City – now a frozen wasteland – in search of his son Sam (Jake Gyllenhaal), who may still be alive.



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SOUL PLANE

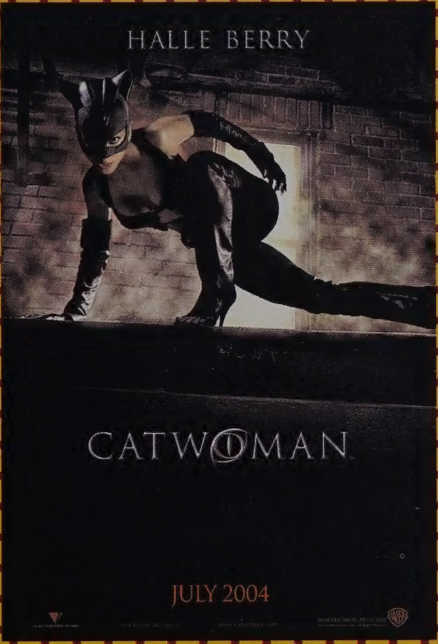
RELEASE 5/28/04

Soul Plane focuses on Dakwan (Kevin Hart), who is awarded a $600 million settlement in a lawsuit from an airline. He takes the money and uses it to found an airline of his own called NWA, with sexy flight attendants, cool music, and an in-flight dance party on each plane. A white family (headed by Tom Arnold) is accidentally booked on an NWA flight.

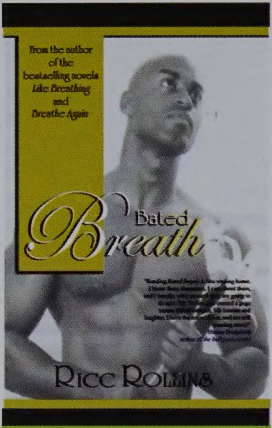
CATWOMAN

COMING IN JULY

Graphic artist Patience Philips (Halle Berry) is murdered by the stooges of Avenal Beauty, the cosmetics company she works for, when she discovers the company's dark secret. An Egyptian mau cat whose life she saved brings her back to life, after which she assumes the identity of the titular feline superhero, seeking vengeance upon the evil head honchos who run Avenal (Sharon Stone, Lambert Wilson).



By RICC ROLLINS


from the author of the bestselling novels Like Breathing and Breathe Again
Bated Breath
Ricc Rollins

Jordan exited the interstate and made the familiar trek home. As he drove by the florist, he was tempted to stop and pick up a large bouquet, but he wasn't sure that that Zander would accept them. He knew that he was wrong for hanging up on Zander. But he was tired of the secrets. After all, Zander had broken the one promise they made to each other. No secrets, no lies.

"What could be so bad? He knows that he can tell me anything?" Jordan asked out loud.

He reached over for his cell phone, turning it back on to call home.

"Nope, that might make matters worse. I know how I'll make it up to him." Jordan said with a devilish smile as he sped home to make things right between the two of them.

As he drove up driveway, he sat for a moment wondering if life as he had come to know it would be over when he walked through the door. He loved his life and didn't want anything to change. But it had. Zander had changed. Jordan knew that something was troubling his partner, but he couldn't put his finger on it. He wanted answers and he wanted them now. But more importantly he wanted things back the way they were.

He thought back to their first date, their first kiss and the first time they made love months after they began their relationship. Both had agreed that they would wait until they were making love instead of having sex.

Jordan had confided in Zander that sex bored him and that he had never made love before, because he had never been in love before. He couldn't believe that he had shared that with Zander their first night together, but talking with 'Z' was like breathing.

He wanted that back. He wanted them to breathe again, to be the couple that shared everything and kept nothing from each other.

The latter thought thrust him back into the present, a place that saddened him the most. He took a deep breath and stepped out of the car.

As he turned the key his heart began beating so loud that he could actually hear it. The alarm chimed as he walked into the door and called out to Zander. No answer. Jordan thought nothing of it as he placed his keys on the small hook that hung from the antique pine hall shelf that he and Zander had bought at an auction in Nashville their first summer together.

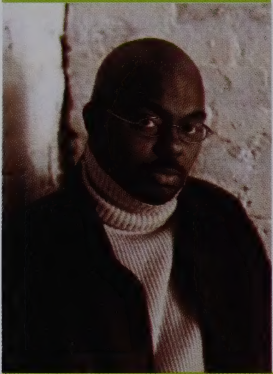
As he rubbed the knots that graced the piece, he smiled thinking back to the bidding war that Zander engaged in with the young blonde woman who thought that she and she alone should have the piece. Jordan found himself laughing out loud as he remembered the lady's face when Zander made his final bid.

"Three thousand, four hundred seventeen dollars and fifty cents! Sir are you sure?"

"Yes sir I am, would you like cash, check or American Express Platinum? Name your pleasure." Zander said with a smug look on his face.

"Either would be fine. Going once, going twice, sold to the man with the determined look," the auctioneer said still stunned.

The blond woman rolled her eyes at Zander as she walked away in a huff. Zander just smiled proudly. He was determined to have the piece for



RICC ROLLINS
is an award-winning talk show host, motivational speaker, lecturer, actor and best selling author. A native of Tampa, FL Ricc graduated from C. Leon King High School and matriculated at Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, majoring in business.

By RICC ROLLINS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 52

his home. It spoke to him and that was all it took. And Jordan knew there would be no convincing him otherwise. He could sense Zander's immediate affection for the piece from the moment he laid eyes on it. While he liked the piece, Jordan could take it or leave it, but he knew that for Zander it was more. Later that evening as they returned to the inn, Zander shared that the piece reminder him of his grandmother, Marie Eady, and that he wanted it as a lasting reminder of her.

Jordan's reminiscing was cut short as the phone began ringing. He dashed to answer the phone when he realized that Zander hadn't picked up.

"Hello?"

The person on the other end said nothing.

"Hello?" Is anyone there?"

Again nothing.

"Hello? Is anyone there?"

Not a sound. And then the call disconnected.

"Z, you here? Z!"

No answer.

Jordan made his way up the stairs to see if possibly Zander was up there. As he approached their bedroom he could hear the shower running. He tipped quietly into the bathroom hoping to scare Zander. He smiled at the thought.

As he pulled back the curtain. No Zander.

As he turned to leave he noticed Zander's body slumped on the floor by the sink in the dressing area.

Jordan rushed over to see if he was okay.

"Z, Z Z! can you hear me?" Jordan said gently shaking Zander.

Zander opened his eyes slightly and tried to speak.

"Are you okay?"

Zander tried to speak again, but nothing but tufts of air escaped as he mouthed something to Jordan.

Jordan scrambled for his cell phone while trying to hold on to his partner.

"Hold on baby, help is on the way."

Zander said nothing as his eyes rolled back into his head and he lost consciousness.

"Hello, 9-1-1, what is your emergency?"

"My partner is unconscious..."

"Okay, where are you sir? Is it an office?"

"An office, no! What are you talking about it's our home!"

"When you said partner, I assumed you were at an office, I...."

"No, he's my life partner!" Jordan said, somewhat agitated at the operator's assumption.

"Is he breathing?"

"Hold on-"

Jordan put the phone down trying to see if Zander was breathing.

"I can't tell," Jordan frantically told the operator.

"Sir, calm down, sir, I need you to be calm."

"Okay," Jordan whispered almost like a frightened little boy.

"Sir? Are you there?"

"Yes, I'm here..."

"Okay sir, I need the address..."

Jordan gave the operator the address and the pass code to the security gate.

"Please hurry..." Jordan begged.

"Sir, stay with me on the phone until the EMS get there."

"Okay," Jordan said barely being able to breathe himself.

"Take a deep breath."

Jordan did as he was instructed, hoping to regain his bearings. It didn't help. He was frightened.

"Sir, are you there?"

"Huh? Yes I'm here..."

"Is the gentleman's condition improving at all or is it the same?"

Jordan leaned down to see if he could determine Zander's vitals. He still couldn't tell if Zander was breathing and he couldn't find a pulse.

"Sir?"

"I can't tell! I can't tell..."

"Sir! Sir! Sir, you must calm down!" The operator said sternly.

"Okay," Jordan said taking another deep breath, "I'm okay. What should I do?"

"Where are you?"

"In the dressing area."

"Perfect, is there a hand mirror close by?"

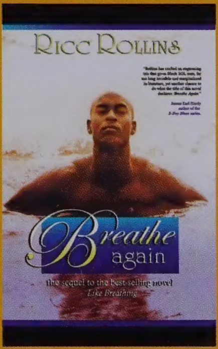
"Yes. There's one on the sink..."

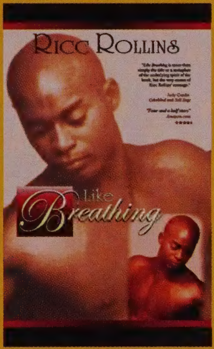
"Okay, I need you to gently lay your partner down on the ground. Carefully, I can't stress enough that you must be as gentle as you can."

Jordan did as instructed, laying Zander's head down. He quickly moved to the sink, retrieving the hand mirror.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 54

OTHER TITLES FROM
RICC ROLLINS





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By RICC ROLLINS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

"Okay, I have it," Jordan told the operator.

"Great! Now put it at your partner's nostrils and see if it any kind of condensation settles on the mirror. If it does, he's breathing."

Jordan placed the mirror at Zander's nostrils. A slight film fogged a corner of the mirror.

"Yes!" Jordan exclaimed, hope brimming from his voice.

"Good, that's a good sign. Is it a lot or a little?"

"A little."

"Okay, continue to check periodically and EMS should be there any moment now."

Jordan continued to check for signs of Zander's breathing and report back to the operator.

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"Where are they? I thought you said they should be here by now."

"Sir, there is an accident on the interstate and traffic is backed up for about a mile."

"What?!?!?"

"Sir, calm down. The paramedics say there only a minutes away from the off ramp and they should be to you shortly."

"Shortly? Define shortly?"

"Sir, I'm sure that they're doing everything in their power to exit the ramp. People aren't responding to the sirens so they're having a difficult time getting to the exit. How is your partner's breathing now?"

"It's still the same."

"Well that's a good sign, at least there is no noticeable change."

With that said, Jordan heard a knock on the door.

"Come in," Jordan yelled.

"That's the EMS team, sir. You're in capable hands now. I sincerely hope that your friend will be alright."

"Thank you, sir. By the way, what is your name? "

"Anderson, Joshua Anderson."

" Thank you for everything. I could not have done this without you"

"You're welcome boy, I mean son."

"Huh?"

"I said you're welcome sir."

"Oh..."

"Is everything alright?"

"I guess, I have to go now."

Jordan disconnected the call as the workers examined Zander.

"Sir can you tell me what happened?"

"I came in and found him in the dressing room. The next thing I knew, he passed out."

"Hey Craig look at this..."

"Well I'll be, what the..."

"What? What is it?" Jordan asked trying to see what the paramedic was referring to.

"Sir could you step out of the room please, but don't go to far. I may have some more questions for you."

"I want to stay right here..."

"Sir, please do as you're told."

"This is our house and I am not moving."

"Sir, I am going to ask you once again to please leave the room. We've got everything under control. You're only getting in the way."

Jordan couldn't argue. He stepped into the hallway.

"Craig, do you see this? What in the hell happened here?"

"Looks like there was a struggle?"

"You think the guy in the hall had anything to do with it?"

"I don't know. You think?"

"He looks so familiar to me."

"Yeah he does."

"I know that I've seen him somewhere before."

"Don't you hate when that happens."

Jordan continued to pace waiting on someone to tell him something. He took another deep breath hoping to soothe his frazzled nerves. As he exhaled his cell phone rang.

"Jordan Jacobs, may I help you?"

"Jordan, you okay?"

"Hello Mama. How are you? No I'm not okay. Zander has passed out and I don't know what's wrong with him."

"What! What happened?" Mamie asked.

Jordan relayed the incident to Mamie while continuing to pace.

"That's where I know him from! He's that dude from the TV!"

"Nah, he just looks like him. You know they all look alike..."

"You got a point there, but I just heard him say his name. Jordan Jacobs."

"Wonder what he's doing here."

"He told you he lived here."

"He did say something about this being their house..."

"Who do you think this guy is to him?"

"I don't know, but from the looks of it he cares a lot about him."

"Maybe it was a lover's quar-

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rel," Craig said feigning a limp wrist.

"You think they're queer? "the other paramedic whispered.

"I don't know but you need to make sure that you have your gloves on just in case."

"Yep, got em' on. I guess we should cover this guy up. Wonder why he was naked?"

"Your guess is as good as mine. Go ask that Jacobs fellow for a robe or something. This guys business is all exposed."

"Yep, kinda makes you wish you were a black man don't it. Look at the size of it."

"I'm beginning to think I'm the only "normal" one in the house."

"Just an observation, I mean how could you miss it."

"Go get something to put on this guy, you freak."

"I got your freak, buddy!" Sam said grabbing his crotch.

Craig didn't reply he just shook his head at his partner and returned to attending to Zander.

"Excuse me sir, but we need some clothing for your friend."

"Hold on, Ma! Better yet, I'll call you back."

"Okay baby, keep me posted, I'll say a prayer for you both."

"Do that Ma, do that. Love you Mama!"

"Me too baby, you and Zander."

Jordan disconnected the call as he made his way to the dressing room to find something to put on Zander.

"Here you go." Jordan said as he handed the EMS worker a pair of gray sweats and a Zander's fraternity t-shirt.

"Thanks. Here you go, Craig. Sir, do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions?"

"I'll be glad to answer any questions you have. But can't we answer them on the way to the hospital?"

"Your friend is in bad shape. Can you tell me again how this happened?"

"As I told you, I came in and found him in the dressing room barely breathing. The next thing I knew he had passed out."

"Oh I see."

"You see what?"

"Rhetorical comment, that means..."

"I know what it means."

"What was I thinking, you being on television and all..."

Jordan said nothing. He could feel the blood rushing from his face.

"Sir, you alright?"

"I'm fine. Shouldn't we be on our way to the hospital?"

"We'll be leaving shortly, just waiting on the Sheriff."

"The Sheriff?

"Well, it looks like there was some kind of scuffle here and judging by your friend's condition, this could very well be a homicide before it's over."

Hearing those words caused Jordan's stomach to turn.

"You can't possibly think that I had anything to do with this. Do you?"

The technician said nothing, but it was written over his face. He did.

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THE SUPERS MODEL OF THE WORLD
PLANE CRASH

Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schiffer, and Rachel Hunter are flying to a super models conference in Paris, when suddenly the Captain of the plane announces: "We have just lost all power to the engines of the plane and are going to make an emergency crash landing - please assume the brace position immediately!" Immediately the three models look at each other and start preparing for the worst. Claudia quickly pulls out some lipstick and make-up and starts fixing her face up. Bewildered, Naomi and Rachel ask: "What in the hell are you doing Claudia fixing up your make-up-we are about to fricking crash!" Claudia responds: "Well I know for a fact that the rescue workers will search for, and save first, the people who have the best looking faces-this is why I am putting on my make-up." Immediately Rachel Hunter rips open her blouse to expose two beautiful mounds of flesh which inexplicably defy the law of gravity. Totally confused, Naomi and Claudia shout: "Rachel have you lost your fucking senses?? Why are you baring your breasts for everyone to see-we are about to die!" Rachel responds: "I have it on good authority that in plane crashes, the rescue workers look to save first the women with big beautiful breasts-this is why I am exposing my tits!" Not hesitating for a moment, Naomi Campbell pulls down her skirt and Panties to expose her female "love triangle." Freaking out, Claudia and Rachel Yell: "Naomi - Are your fucking crazy?? Why are you exposing your pussy for everyone to see??" Calmly, Naomi responds: "BITCH PLEASE! I know for a fact that the first thing the rescue workers always look for in plane crashes is the black box!!"

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The Entertainer
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Aurora, IL

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I am the grace of Jill Scott,
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I am the words of Lauryn Hill,
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I am the beats of Missy Elliott,
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My rhymes from Rakim.

I am the blues of Billie Holiday,
With a dash of B. B. King.

I am the truthsome Marvin Gaye,
And all the realness he brings.

I am the slow jams of Barry white,
Mixed with a tune of Earth, Wind, and Fire.

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And my voice gets even higher.

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With just a softness of Sade.

I am the all grown up Brandy,
And the sexy Beyonce.

I am the royalness of Queen Latifah,
With the energy of Nas.

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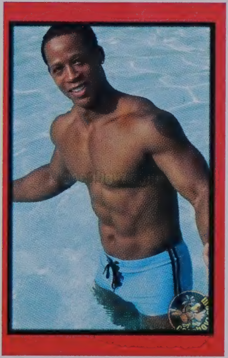

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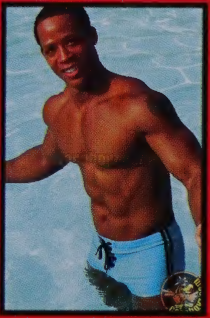

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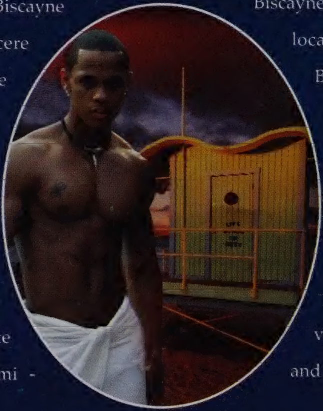

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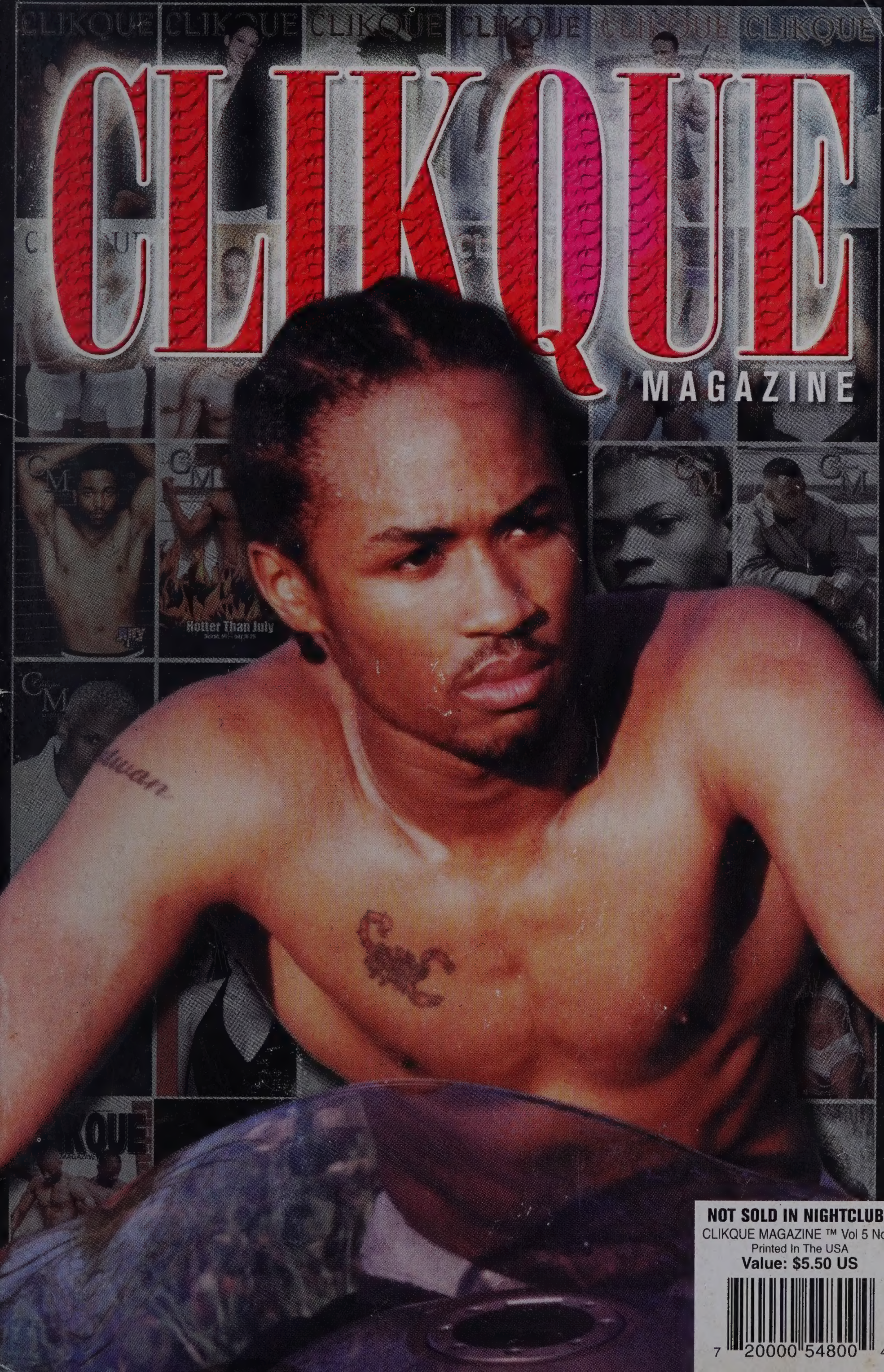
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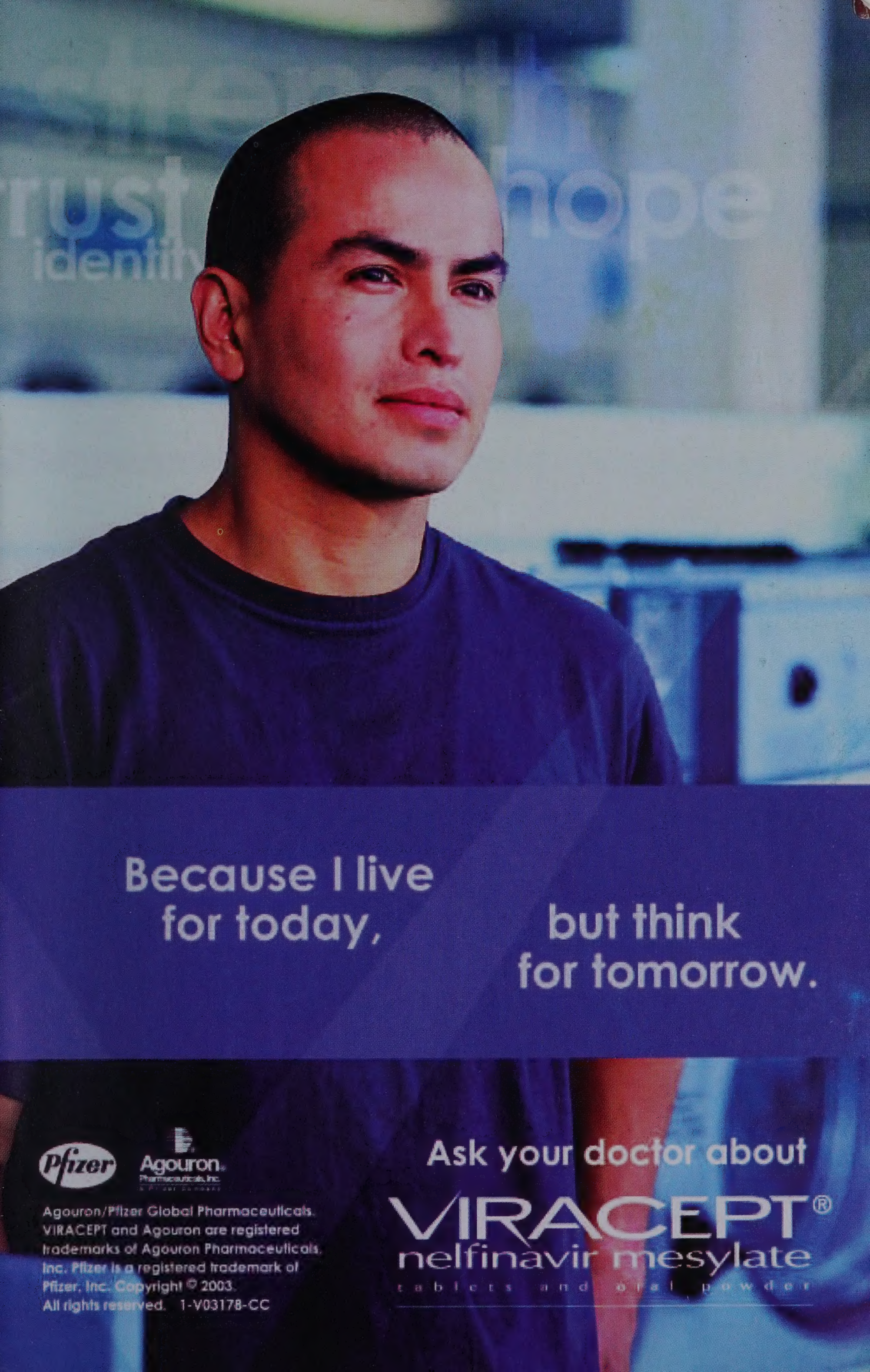

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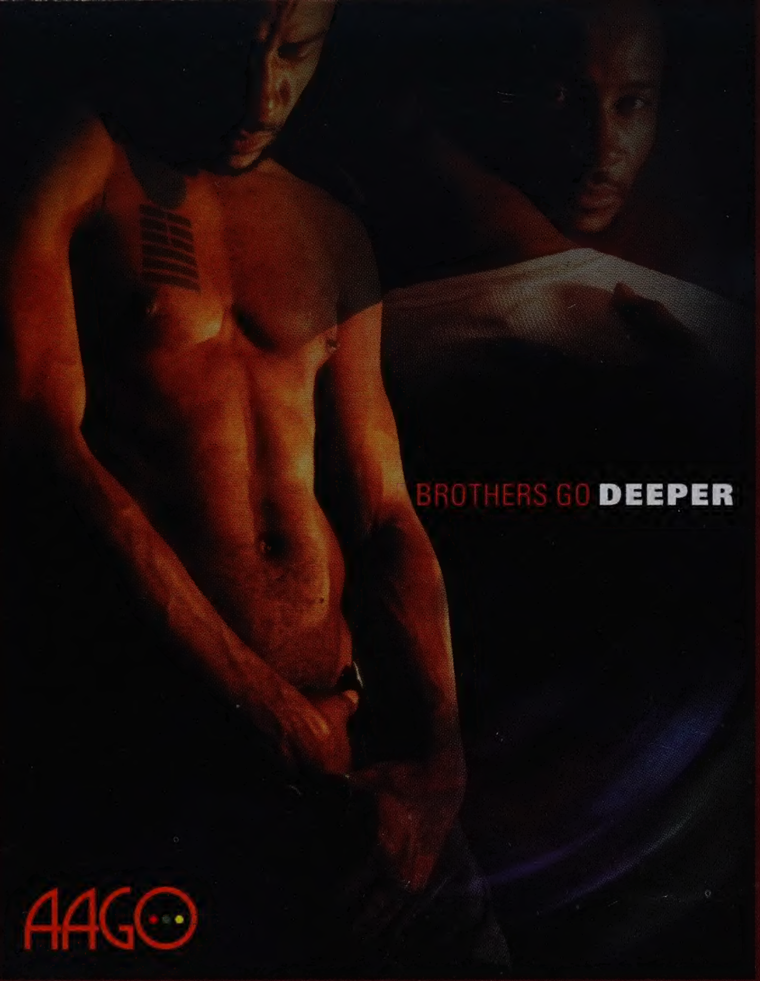

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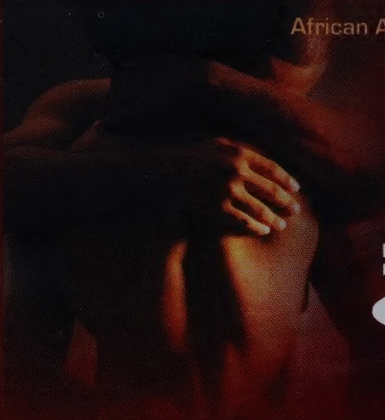

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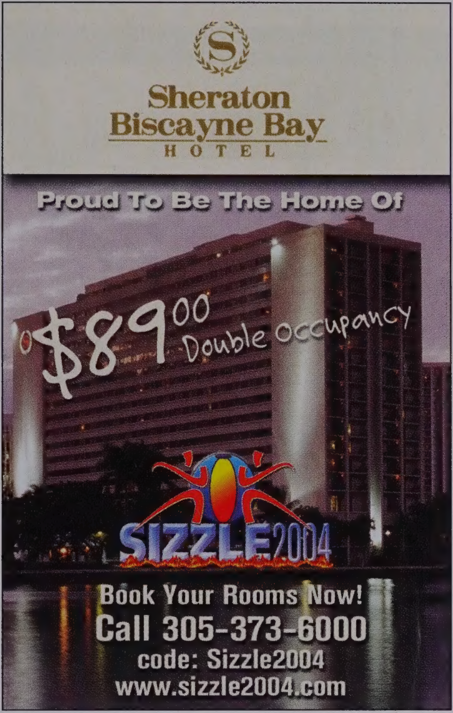

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By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

Black gays launch 'marriage equality' campaign

$100,000 ad campaign to promote support for gay rights

WASHINGTON — A newly formed coalition of African-American gay leaders announced plans this week for a $100,000 media campaign to promote support in the black community for same-sex marriage and to fight a constitutional amendment banning such marriages.

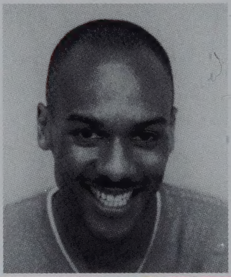
At a Dec. 8 news conference in Washington, D.C., members of the National Black Justice Coalition said their goal, among other things, is to refute claims by anti-gay groups that the majority of African Americans oppose same-sex marriage.

"Do not be fooled by a few recent poll numbers into thinking that marriage will divide the black community in the upcoming election year," said Keith Boykin, a White House aide during the Clinton administration and co-founder of the coalition. "We are here to correct the record in the media and to tell the public that marriage is not a wedge issue for African Americans."

Boykin said the coalition's media campaign calls for raising and spending $100,000 for advertisements targeting the African-American media and to develop a Web site to "counter right-wing misinformation about blacks and marriage equality."

He said the coalition would hold future news conferences to announce new supporters of the campaign, including prominent African-American politicians, civil rights leaders and entertainers.

"By the beginning of the New Year, we will launch the first-ever Web site to counter right-wing misinformation about blacks and marriage equality," Boykin said. "And soon after the New Year, we will be holding new events to announce new supporters of our campaign."



just
civil unioned?

Among those who have already endorsed the coalition's efforts and who pledged support for same-sex marriage, according to literature released by the coalition, are Coretta Scott King, widow of the slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.; comedian and actress Whoopi Goldberg; Democratic presidential candidates Carol Moseley Braun and the Rev. Al Sharpton; U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.); and San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown.

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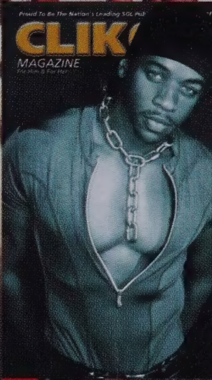
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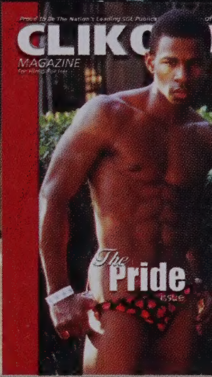
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MTV Said To Revive Plans For ALL GAY NETWORK

For the past several years, Viacom Inc., the media giant that owns such networks as CBS, MTV and Showtime, has volleyed around the idea of producing a gay-themed premium cable network. Just as that idea appeared dead, a report has surfaced that the company is resurrecting plans for the network.

According to reports by Reuters and the Hollywood Reporter, Viacom is renewing plans to launch the all-gay network, known at this stage as Outlet. The channel is to be revived by the MTV Networks, according to the reports, which had worked on the project for several years with its corporate sibling, Showtime Networks.

Showtime first developed the idea a decade ago, but plans for the network were placed on the back burner indefinitely last year.

"Due to the current economic climate, the timetable has slowed down for the development of a new network dedicated to programming to the gay and lesbian audience," Viacom officials said in a statement at the time.

A source at Showtime said they had not heard anything new regarding the project, but directed inquiries to MTV instead. Officials at MTV and Viacom did not return calls seeking comment by press time.

But an independent media company has apparently beaten Viacom to the punch.

In December, Palm Springs, Calif.-based PrideNation Networks launched the country's first 24-hour gay-themed TV network – at least in a manner of speaking.

For $5.95 a month, people anywhere in the world with a broadband computer connection can access the network through their computer. For a separate fee, they can purchase hardware that transmits the network to their TV.

But Allen Edwards, the president of PNN, said the fact that the network wasn't on cable was actually a benefit, not a hindrance.

"Basically what we're able to do is we really have no limits, because we're not on cable, we're not on satellite or mainstream television, so we can really present the community in reality form," Edwards said.

Troubled history for cable gay tv channels

2000 | APRIL

The Palm Springs, Calif.-based Gay Television Network says it will debut Oct. 1 with a 12-hour-a-day programming schedule and offerings to include gay-themed films, a morning talk show, music videos and a program on early gay activism in Los Angeles and New York.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

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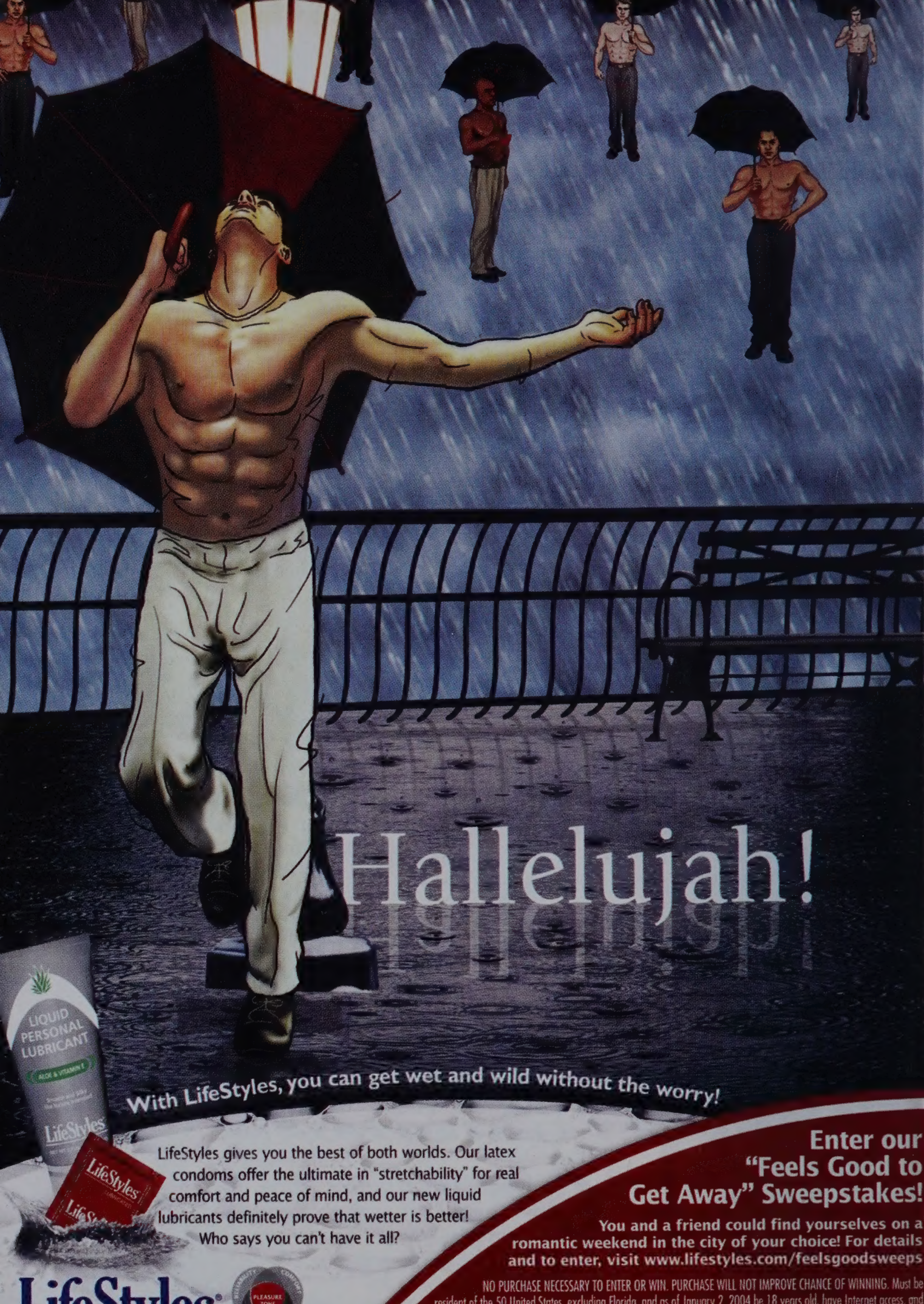

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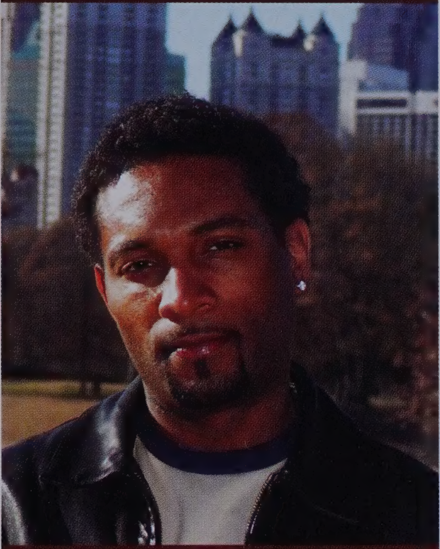

Dwight Powell
Editor - In -Chief

What kind of person are you? What moves you? What's your driving force? What excites you? What are you most passionate about? What is the one thing that gives you the most pleasure. The one thing that you would do all day if time allowed. Do you know?

Why are you on this earth? Are you just occupying space? Are you living vicariously through the lives and successes of others. Are you gainfully employed? Is it a career that you find most fulfilling or is it just a job. Are you a doer or a dreamer?

These and many other questions I would like to challenge you to ask yourself. Pondered on the mark you will leave when your license expires on this earth. Big or small, what impact would you have made on society. And most importantly, did you live your life to the fullest of your potential and abilities.

For 2004 and beyond, I challenge you to look deep within yourself. Take stock and evaluate the things that create the most discomfort for you. Begin seeking the you that allows you to live your life at it's fullest potential with the least discomfort possible.

If you have a passion for something, I challenge you to begin fulfilling that passion. A passion is something that I finds fulls me with utter happiness and pleasure. If you like to write or paint, do these things.

I challenge you to move from alongside of the road spectating. Stop living your life vicariously through the lives of others and begin to fulfill your own dreams and desires. Discover the things that move and excite you the most. I challenge you to be independent and do everything possible for yourself. This, in an attempt to make you the best you can be.

Finally, remember that life isn't fair. Resolve to the fact that life isn't fair and it won't ever be. It is with this realization that you will learn to accept and deal the challenges that life throws your way.

Please forward letters to the editor to:

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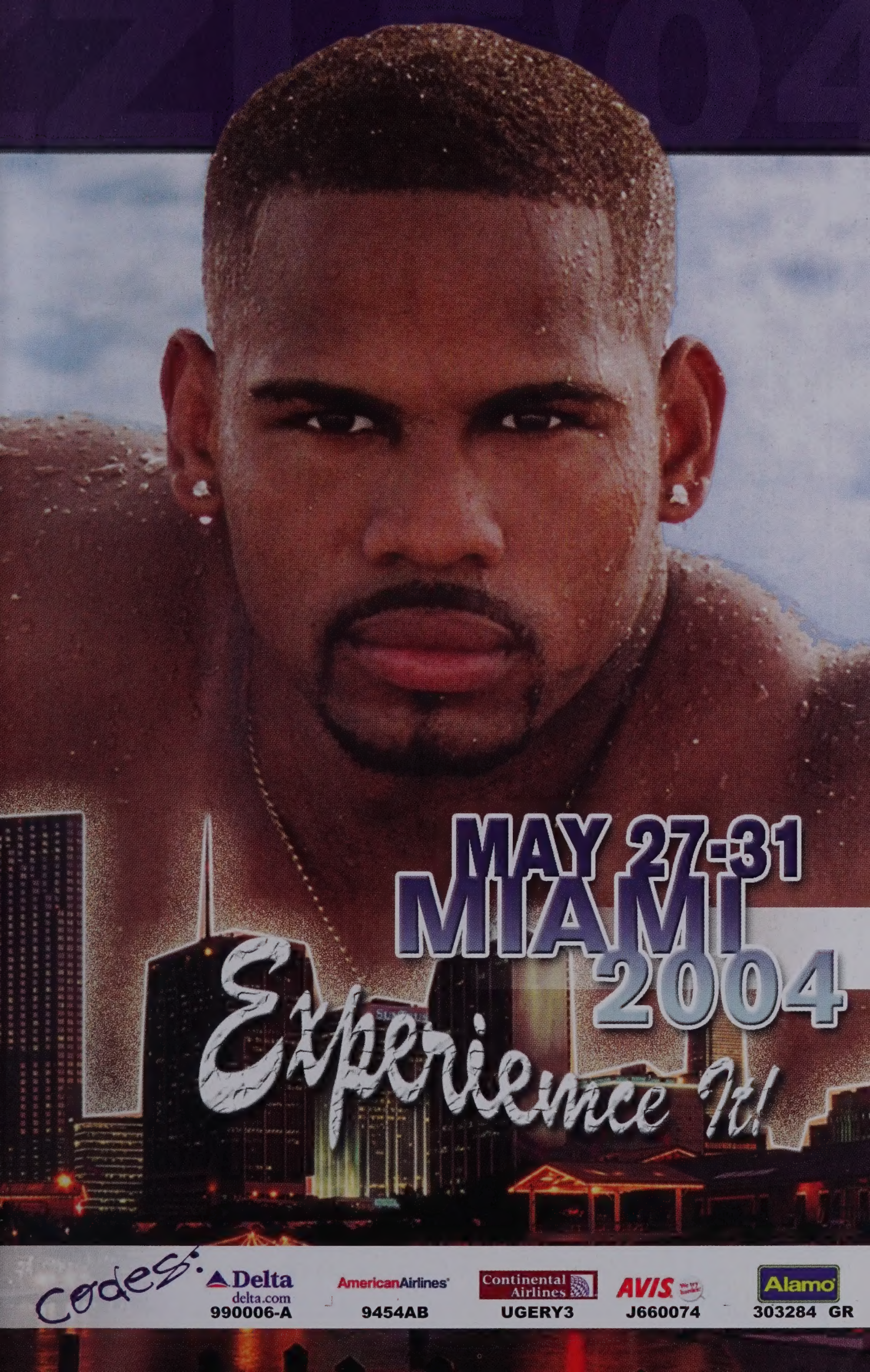
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NY MITCH RUSSO

Six Steps To Wellness

If you spend time at the gym, chances are you're in pretty good physical shape and enjoying your share of admirers wherever you go. But is looking good in a tank top all there is to being healthy? Of course not.

"Keeping your body, mind and spirit in balance is the key," says Robert Volinsky, a New York City-based licensed massage therapist whose business, Restorative Therapies, helps clients achieve overall wellness. "When the important aspects of our lives are running smoothly and make us happy, wellness is a natural result."

Volinsky incorporates a comprehensive approach to health and wellness that includes massage, aromatherapy and Reiki (a sacred healing art that uses the hands and mind). He shared with us the following six steps to wellness that all of us can use:

STRESS BE GONE!

A large proportion of doctor visits are related to stress, according to the National Stress Organization. And one way to reduce stress is to avoid working to the point of burning out. "Take mini-breaks during work, not for coffee or another cigarette, but to breathe," says Volinsky, who suggests taking ten slow, relaxed deep breaths. "It's like a mini-meditation. When you're done breathing, you'll be surprised at how easily this exercise can calm you down."

WORK IT OUT.

"Nothing erases stress and promotes wellness

NY MITCH RUSSO

better than a little sweat," says Volinsky. "Moving around and using your muscles helps your body remove toxins and benefits your heart and lungs." Play tennis, take a walk, run in the park, grab a dumbbell or do anything else you enjoy that gets your body moving and active, says Volinsky. And don't forget to stretch (or better yet, take a yoga class). Studies have consistently shown that stretching not only increases flexibility but also slows aging and promotes better sleep! (If you have health problems, be sure to consult your doctor before beginning an exercise routine).

EAT CONSCIOUSLY.

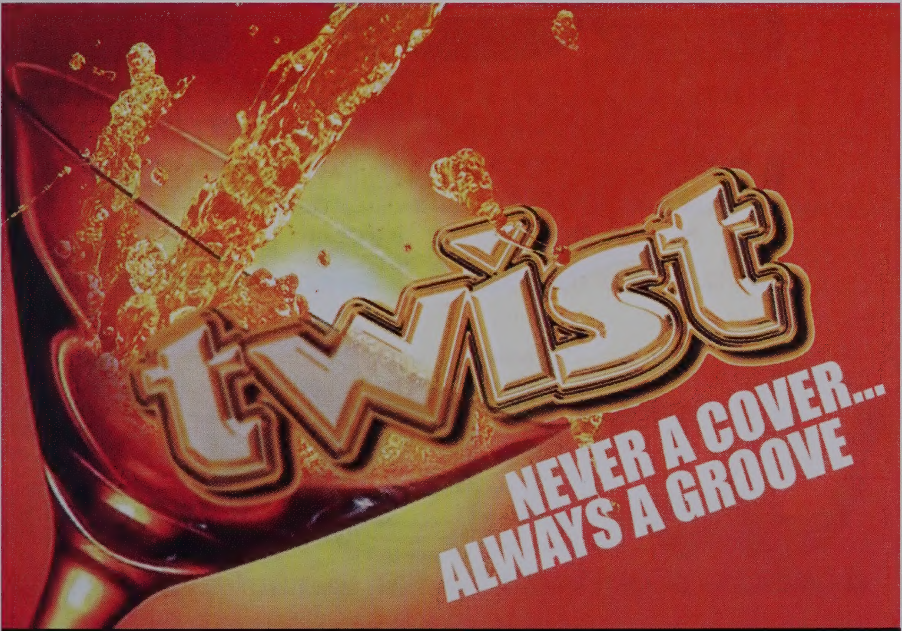
Notice we're not using the word "diet" here. We're merely talking about having an awareness of the food we eat. "Your meals are a time to give back to yourself, to support your body and your life," says Volinsky. "Be present and conscious while eating. This will not only promote better digestion of food, but amplify appreciation for the wellness you are trying to maintain." Volinsky warns that eating quickly can lead to indigestion and other digestive problems. "Give your salivary glands a chance to function. After all, food is more that just fuel, it's life!"

FEEL THE LOVE.

We're not just talking about the hottie you took to the movies last Saturday night. Love also comes from family, friends and your community. "We are social beings by nature," says Volinsky. "Having time with those we care about is social 'food' we can't live without."

GET YOUR ZZZ'S.

Are you getting enough sleep (seven to eight hours a night)? Not only does adequate sleep help your gym-worked muscles rebuild and grow, it's absolutely crucial to maintaining health and wellness, says Volinsky. "Sleep is the time our body rejuvenates and restores itself. Many people are sleep-deprived, which can dramatically undermine their health, making them more prone to illness, stress and depression."



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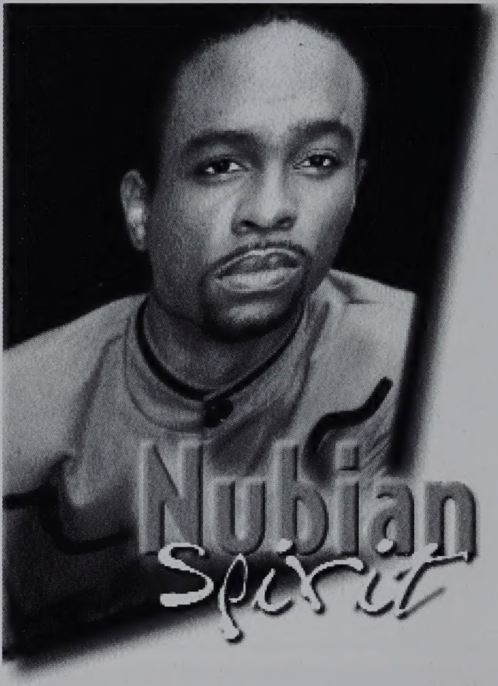

Becoming Your Ultimate Self

Harambee (Let us come together): *It is indeed great to be back with you again. Since the beginning NubianSpirit has been about personal power and triumph. With these messages it is my desire to encourage us to see beyond the obvious and look into the depths of our souls and psyches to resurrect our potential and resolve to continue to strive to be the best we can be, always. In so doing we are on the path of becoming our Ultimate Self.*

As you move into 2004 and seek your place in this New Year, first take an inventory of your life and your goals. Encourage yourself to look not only at what you resolve to do, or stop doing this year, but also at the "why" of these resolutions. The "why" will help you to develop honest ways to deal with the reasons the resolutions exist. For each resolution you would embark on a similar fact finding mission. For instance, if your resolution is to lose weight or get more "fit" (common for many) then taking a good inventory of why you want this will help you gain focus and increase your chances for success (this year!). If you find that you want to lose weight or get fit in order to be more attractive to someone else, then you might also seek ways to find yourself more attractive to yourself. Then no matter how you look you will love yourself and this self-love will empower you to work hard at looking and feeling your best for yourself which will make you much more attractive to that "someone else."

If, however, you remain focused on looking better for someone else then your focus will be on other's reactions to you and if, for some reason, the people you present yourself to do not react the way you want or need then your resolve eventually is lost due to the lost sense of accomplishment or appreciation from those "others." The point is simple you cannot find happiness outside of yourself. It takes you understanding why you do what you do and why you want what you want to insure that you get exactly what you need and want out of life. If your goals are contingent on what someone

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

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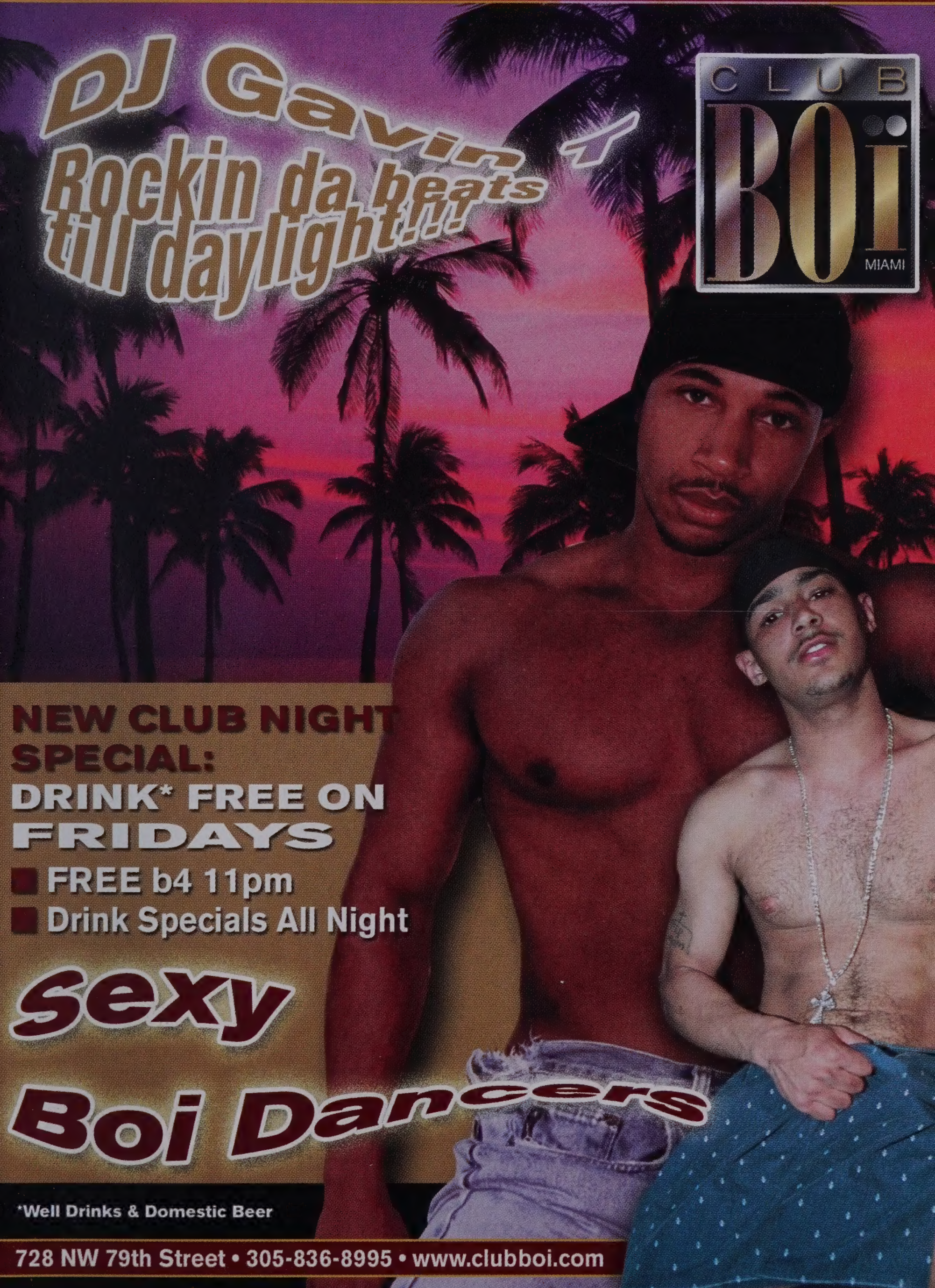

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STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

else thinks, says, or does then your entire resolution is outside of your control and failure is eminent.

My point, beloved, is "stop doing the same things over and over again, expecting different results- this is by definition is insanity." If you find yourself in the same place this year as in last year, or years gone past, then -choose to do something different today! It is OK to seek counseling and uncover the hidden desires of your heart or the negative scripts that play in your mind and undermine your success. Only you can find these answers and only you can use the key to unlock your hidden treasures. Counselors, ministers, advisors, and seers can only point the way, reflect back what you are saying (verbally and nonverbally), and offer insight so you can choose to use or discard the stuff inside of you. Believe me there is stuff you can use (strengths) and stuff you can discard (baggage).

If like most of us we resolve to be better, have more, and do more in this new year; then some quiet moments of meditation and reflection -honest soul searching will yield powerful results on your journey to being your ultimate self.

Take a moment to reflect and meditate on these words:

I live with integrity, using my imagination for good and to be a caring and courageous person. I take full responsibility for my life and offer respect for the lives of those around me. I will live with the power of love and refuse to be drawn into the negative spiral of hatred or fear. I am all that I am supposed to be and I will be nothing less that my perfect self today.

Beloved stay on the path and you will be your Ultimate Self long before you know it; we will share this journey together. Until then... Peace and Blessings.

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

NOVEMBER

Launch plans for Gay Television Network delayed.

2001 | JANUARY

Officials with the Gay Television Network reschedule the channel's launch to Jan. 23, then move it again to Feb. 2, on the Dish Network. Dish later says the announcement of an agreement with GTN is premature.

MARCH

The Gay Television Network changes the name of its gay cable channel to Triangle Television Network after its satellite provider raises concerns about using the word "gay" in the channel's name.

SEPTEMBER

Triangle Television Network misses Sept. 5 launch, the fifth one the network has announced since November 2000.

Canadian broadcast regulators order Shaw Communications to offer PrideVision, making it that nation's first gay-themed television channel.

2002 | JANUARY

Viacom properties Showtime and MTV announce they will research the viability of a gay-oriented network. Later, informal advisory panels meet in several U.S. cities. Panel members say a spring 2003 launch date is discussed with the working name "Outlet."

APRIL

Triangle Television Network apparently inks an agreement with Dish Network to carry the channel, but a launch date is not announced.

DECEMBER

Headline Media Group, the parent company of PrideVision, slashes the network's staff amid budget problems.

2003 | JULY

PrideVision announces July 12 that it is available in U.S. through Largo Communications, a satellite distributor in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., that provides access to Canadian satellite company Bell ExpressVu.

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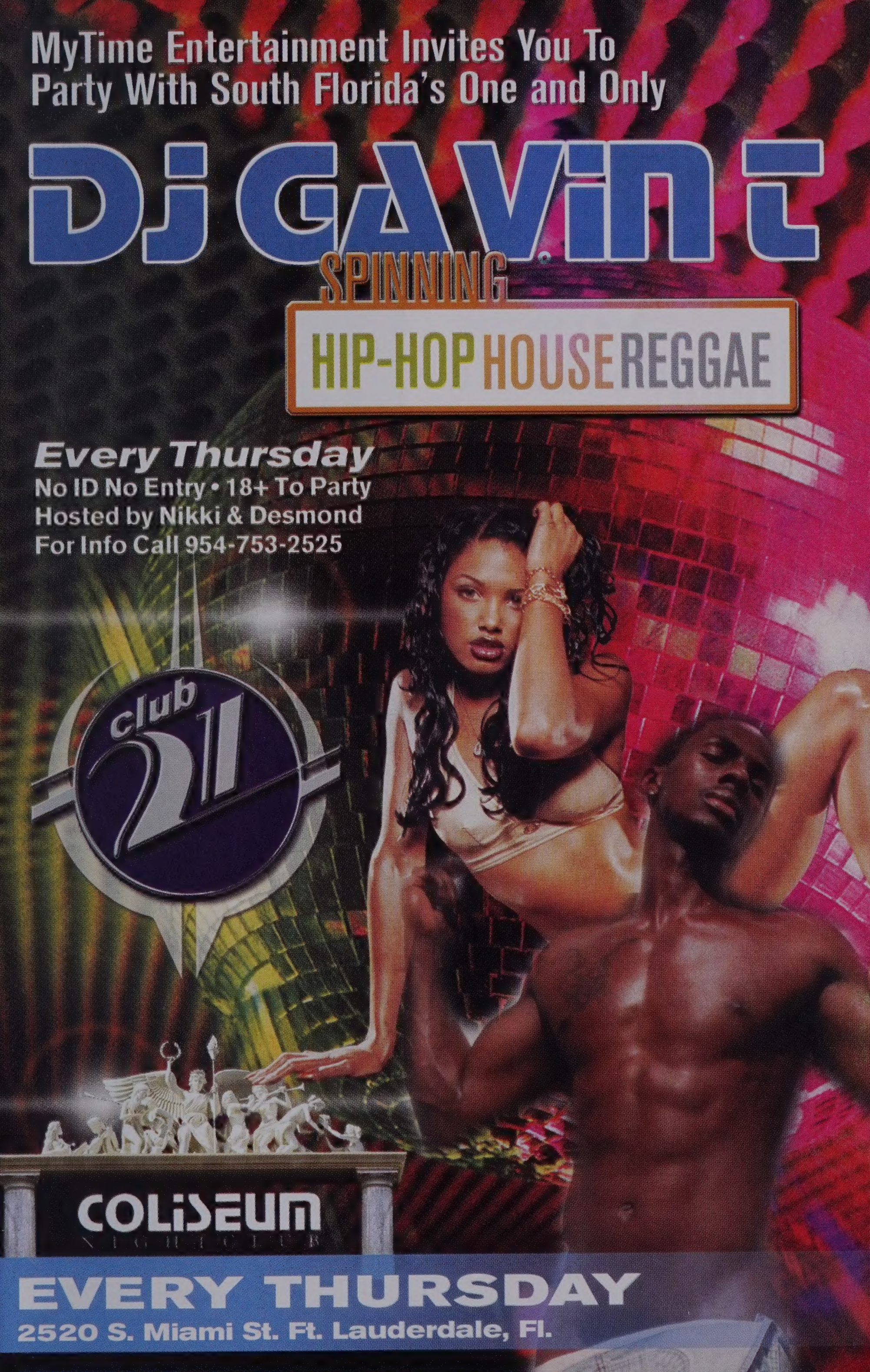

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Ten Things To Know When Buying A Home

Here is an overview of the most important points. For a more detail look into the items listed below, visit www.clikque.com

1. Don't buy if you can't stay put.

If you can't commit to remaining in one place for five years or more, then owning is probably not for you, at least not yet. With slow appreciation and the costs of buying and selling a home, you may end up losing money if you sell any sooner than that.

2. Start by shoring up your credit.

Since you will most likely need to get a mortgage to buy a house, you must make sure your credit history is as clean as possible. A few months before you start househunting, get copies of your credit report. Make sure the facts are correct. Fix any problems you discover.

3. Aim for a home you can really afford.

The rule of thumb is that you can buy housing that runs about two-and-one-half times your annual salary.

4. Don't worry if you can't put down the usual 20 percent.

There are a variety of public and private lenders who, if you qualify, offer low-interest mortgages that require a down payment as small as three percent of the purchase price.

5. Buy in a district with good schools.

This advice applies even if you don't – and won't – have school-age children. Reason: When it comes time to sell, you'll learn that strong school districts are a top priority for many home buyers – thus helping to boost property values.

6. Get professional help.

Look for an exclusive buyer agent, if possible, who will have your interests at heart and can help you with strategies during the bidding process.

7. Choose carefully between points and rate.

When picking a mortgage, you usually have the option of paying additional points – a portion of the interest that you pay at closing – in exchange for a lower interest rate. If you stay in the house for a long time – say five to seven years or more – it's usually a better deal to take the points. The lower interest rate will save you more in the long run.

8. When househunting, bring your camera.

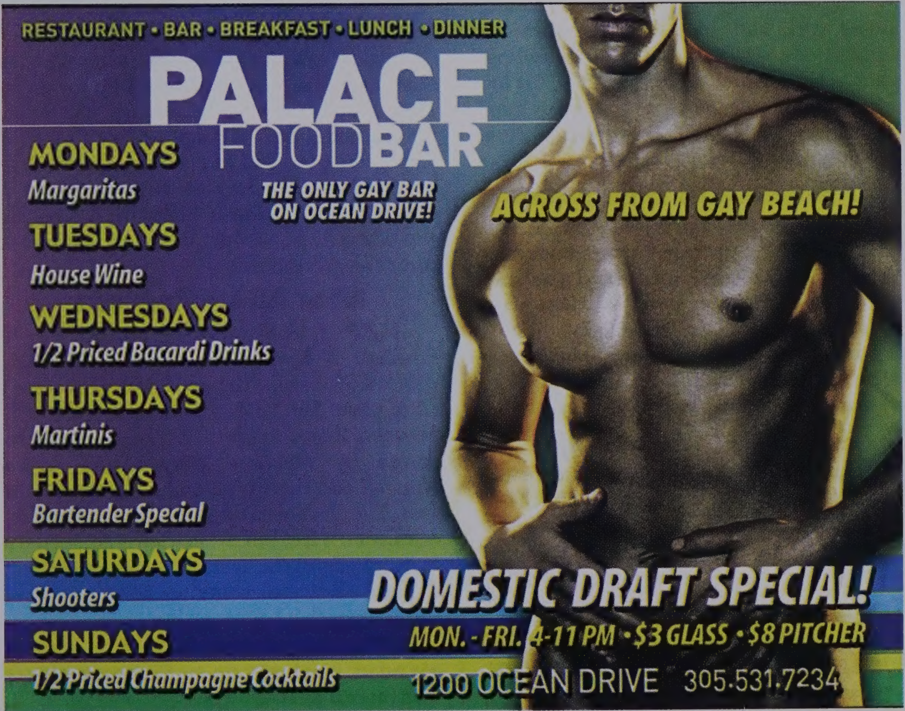
Or at least a notebook to jot down reminders, since after you look at a half-dozen or so houses the details begin to blur in your mind. Best choice would either be an electronic camera that lets you take notes right on the image, or a Polaroid so that you can scribble comments in the margins.

9. Do your homework before bidding.

Your opening bid should be based on the sales trend of similar homes in the neighborhood. So before making it, consider sales of similar homes in the last three months. If homes have recently sold at five percent less than the asking price, you should make a bid that's about eight to 10 percent lower than what the seller is asking.

10. Hire a home inspector.

Sure, your lender will require a home appraisal anyway. But that's just the bank's way of determining whether the house is worth the price you've agreed to pay. Separately, you should hire your own home inspector – preferably an engineer with experience in doing home surveys in the area where you are buying. His or her job will be to point out potential problems that could require costly repairs down the road. ***GOOD LUCK!***



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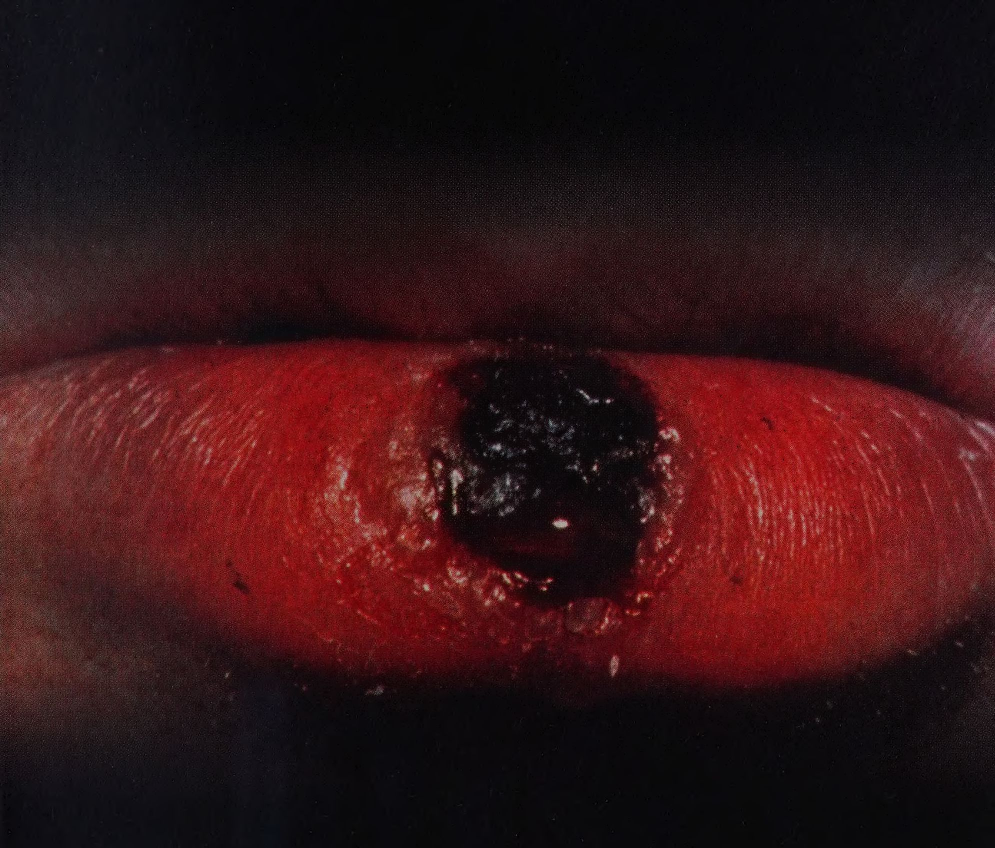

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HEALTH

BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

Regarding Bayard Rustin The Untold Story Of A Gay Activist

The popular history of the civil rights movement centralizes the work of two key figures, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. While Parks is one of the few well-known female activists of that era, her role has been reduced to that of an uppity sister who spontaneously stood up for herself by sitting down in a Montgomery bus. These sexist historians do not tell us that Parks was a carefully selected organizer and that this was a planned act of resistance. Since Martin Luther King was ill prepared to lead the ensuing boycott, a revered pacifist named Bayard Rustin was summoned by preeminent organizer A. Phillip Randolph to train King in non-violent philosophy and grass roots organizing. While Parks has received major acclaim during her lifetime, widespread recognition of Rustin's contributions still eludes him 16 years after his death. Mainstream and black media alike rarely mention him, and when they do, they tend to omit the fact that he was openly homosexual. His immeasurable value to that movement has been only partially, begrudgingly cited. His values and ideals hold many lessons for contemporary black gays striving for self-acceptance and social equality.

Rustin came from a close-knit family of black Quakers. Because he was born out of wedlock, his maternal grandmother Julia chose to raise him with the help of numerous relatives. His numerous accomplishments include organizing the "Journey of Reconciliation" in 1947 which defied segregation laws by sending black and white organizers riding together on public transit; teaching and organizing pacifist resistance in Africa, Chile and Poland; serving as King's key advisor during the Montgomery bus boycott; and organizing the fabled 1963 March on Washington. In 1952, Rustin was arrested in Pasadena for having sex in a car with two men and was later fired him from the Friends of Reconciliation. Many civil rights organizers later distanced themselves from him because of this scandal and his refusal to hide his homosexuality even though they benefited largely from his talents.

In subsequent years, veteran activists failed to note Rustin's efforts thereby obscuring one of their key leaders. Black

BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

gays and lesbians in the '80's were among the first to educate themselves and others about his legacy. Other Countries, the New York based black gay male writers' collective, published a journal that featured an interview with Rustin shortly before his death in 1987. Throughout the nineties, black lgbt activists in Atlanta and other cities named rallies, programs, and awards after him in order to reclaim his legacy. Several biographies have been published which tend to portray Rustin as a seminal unsung hero whose views, affiliations and sexual orientation set him at odds with some of his contemporaries. Rustin received posthumous attention in 2002 when a group of residents from his birthplace West Chester Pennsylvania opposed the school board's decision to name a high school after him because he was briefly a member of a Communist youth and he was openly gay. Some measure of long awaited justice was served when the school board refuted the petition and named the school after their most distinguished son. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2003, PBS aired the long overdue documentary "Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin". During that weekend, Hands On Atlanta presented a screening and public discussion of the film at the MLK Center for Non-Violent Social Change.

You owe it to yourself to find out more about this astute strategist. It is said that service is the rent we pay for our stay here on earth. The only meaningful way for us to really honor Rustin is to emulate him by making our own unique commitment and contribution to human rights. Through learning about Rustin, we may acquire the tools to extricate ourselves from the myths that constrain us today.

We often tell ourselves that we are not skilled or bold enough to contribute to those causes we may sincerely believe in. "Leader worship," perpetuates the fallacy that activism is the exclusive domain of those who possess specific talents, and look and speak in certain ways. We may think we must be out or publicly visible in order to make a difference. We don't all have to serve like Rustin in order to serve. Instead we can be inspired by his example to give what we can in accordance with our own gifts and do that excellently. Many of us are closeted or uncomfortable with high profile movement work, but that doesn't have to prevent us from taking a step beyond where we have gone before. You may maintain a low profile and go online or visit a library and read an essay by Audre Lorde, James Baldwin or Rustin himself. You can send a check to ZAMI, which offers annual scholarships to black lesbian and gay male students or Unity Fellowship, an affirming church led by an openly gay pastor.

Rustin With Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Rustin With Bishop Desmond Tutu

Along our lifelong journey toward self-love, brothers in the life are often derailed by the myth that we have to be as overtly masculine as possible in order to reconcile our homosexuality with our manhood. As a middle-aged gay man, I mourn the loss of a diversity of male archetypes once commonly displayed in the life. Before today's hyper-masculine norms (an affliction I often nickname "butch queen-itis") dominated black gay male sexual and social culture, we celebrated a broader spectrum of gender expression. The confluence of AIDS, unhealed

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 26

BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

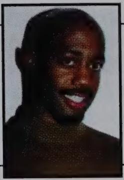
STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

shame, and this deification of the masculine image have wiped the effete man off our cultural landscape. Ironically, without the queens, there would have been no Stonewall uprising nor the resultant gay liberation movements and cultures that followed. None of the clubs where the DJs spin songs that dehumanize gays and women, where we no longer have a place for sissies, would have been built were it not for the queens we so readily disown. As you become more acquainted with Rustin you may learn to appreciate the fact that he was fairly effeminate. You could clock it from an airplane. He apparently was not concerned with butching it up in order to win acceptance. And while he was denied his full due, for the most part he was regarded as a black man of service, a brother who demonstrated a tenacious love for his people.

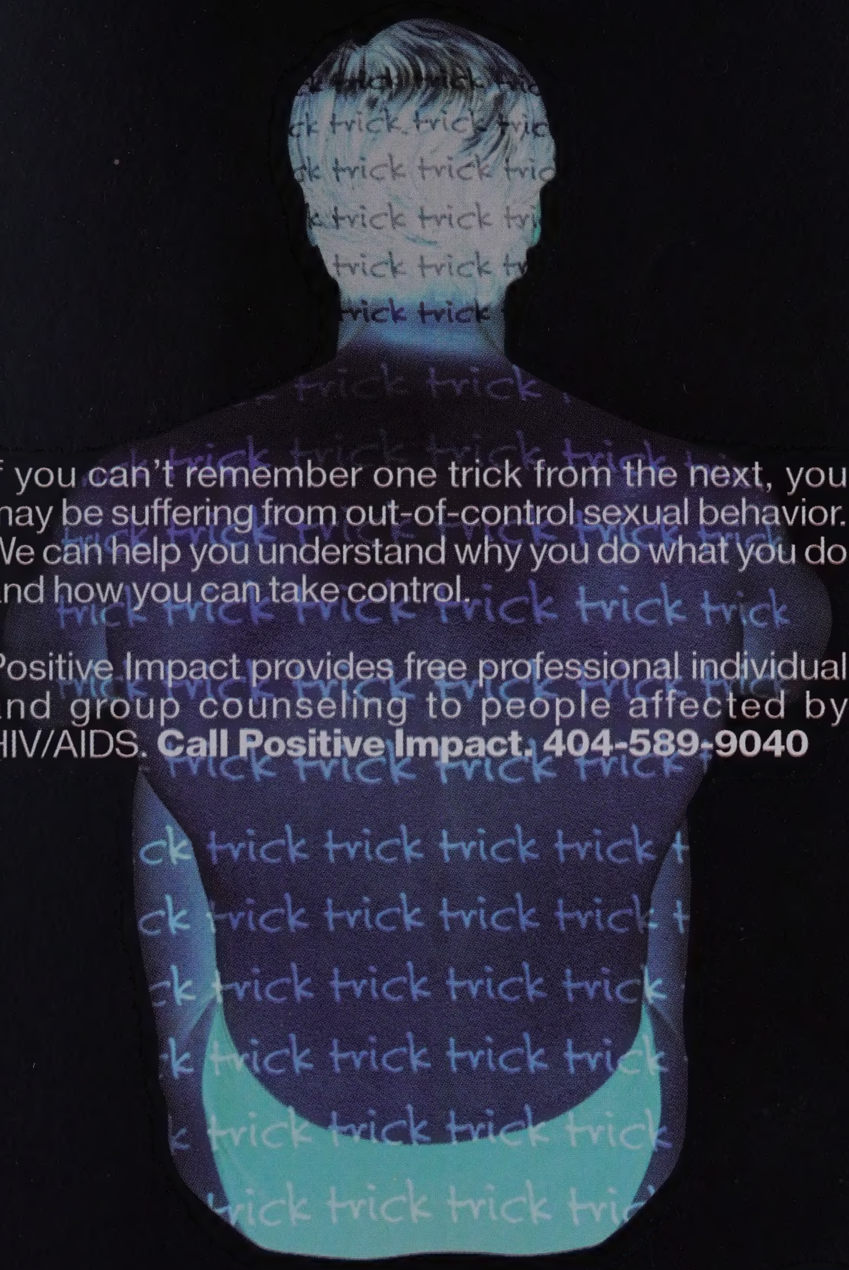
Another enduring myth is that brothers who partner with white men are automatically "snow queens" who are disconnected from black people and ineffectual as community organizers. The contributions of popular black gays who have dated whites have been devalued by fellow activists and those who have done far less for the cause. If you watch the Brother Outsider film, you will observe that Rustin had a series of white lovers. His relationships with white men did not diminish his participation on the main stage of black liberation long before his detractors ever picked up a picket sign or dismissed him as an uncle tom sexual pervert. Consider this the next time you see yourself or someone else berating someone simply because he dates a white person.

The name that we call ourselves as quite a point of contention in black list serves, conferences and discussion groups across the country. We often make specific assumptions about one's pride in their race or sexual orientation based on what label they choose. While some same-gender loving folks think that people who identify as gay blindly follow white gay agendas, some gay blacks believe that those who don't call themselves "gay" must be ashamed of being homosexual. Rustin never prioritized gay liberation as a focus for his work. At the same time, he was, by contemporary standards, extremely "out" and is now heralded as a black gay legend. Baldwin, the most well known openly homosexual black writer, refused to call himself gay or specifically politicize his sexual orientation. Yet his work placed homosexuality in the context of the universal human need of love and championed the rights of all to be free to love whomever they choose. A deeper understanding of how these men framed their sexual identities may help us to relinquish the confining myth that we need to call ourselves a common name to work toward common goals.

We have a lot to gain from the example of Rustin's illustrious life. His near erasure reminds us of the sanctity of our history, and demands that we rediscover our sister and brother outsiders and tell their stories to our young. We need engaging and accessible ways to teach ourselves about our forebears so that they become relevant to our political, sexual, and cultural lives. I invite you to commit to learn more than you already know about at least one black gay freedom fighter of any era. As we come upon Black History month, you can extend the list of usual suspects to include people like Fannie Lou Hamer, Pat Parker, Essex Hemphill, Marlon Riggs, Assoto Saint and others. You may find yourself moved to organize an informal group discussion, arrange a black gay history book club, or volunteer with an organization that serves us. You may be surprised to discover the power you have to expand your own consciousness and make positive change in your community.



Mr. Washington was lovingly raised by Anna and Leon Washington in Queens, New York and has lived in Atlanta for 11 years. His writings have been published in Clikque, Venus, Arise, Washington Blade, Southern Voice, Atlanta Voice, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, He currently serves as the Volunteer and Training Coordinator for Positive Impact, which provides mental health services for people affected by HIV. He can be reached at cwash360@cs.com.



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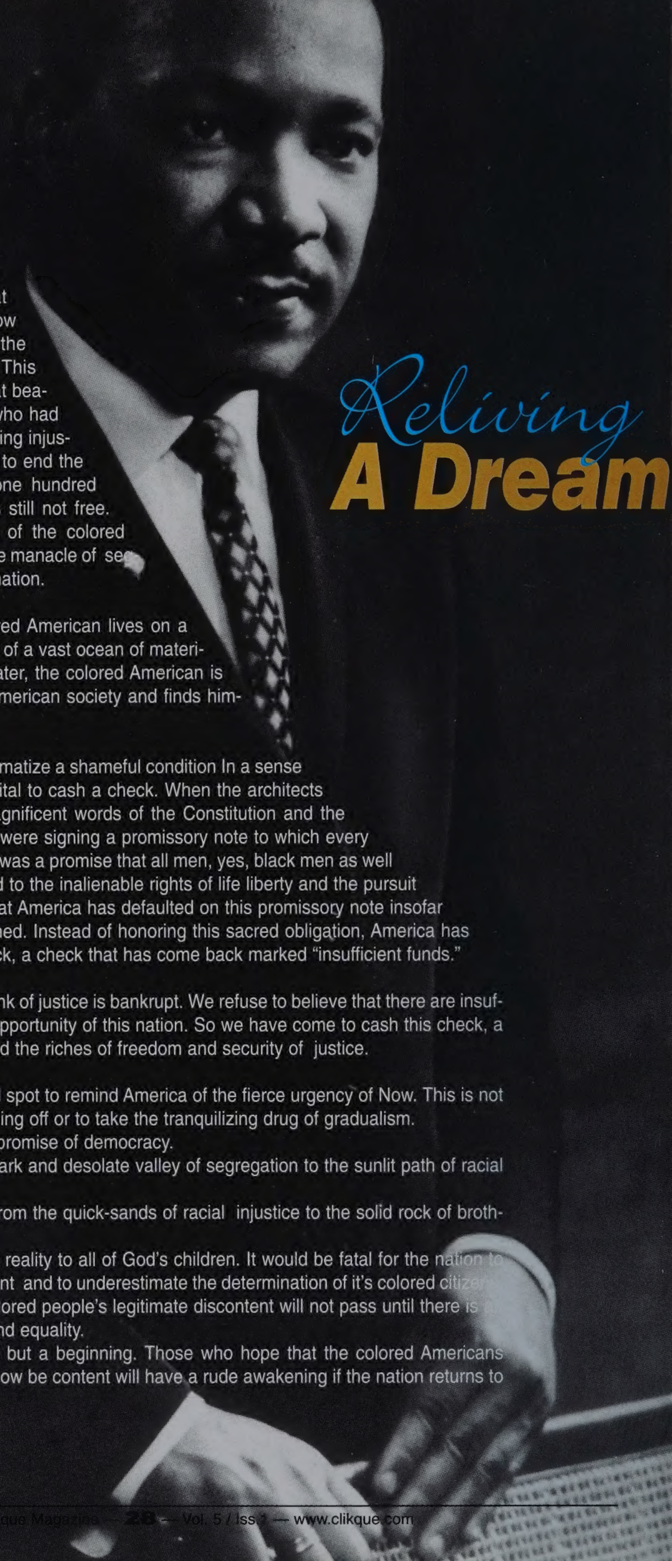

Reliving A Dream

Aug. 28, 1963

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon of hope to millions of slaves, who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But one hundred years later, the colored America is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the colored American is still sadly crippled by the manacle of segregation and the chains of discrimination.

One hundred years later, the colored American lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the colored American is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land.

So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition In a sense we have come to our Nation's Capital to cash a check. When the architects of our great republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed to the inalienable rights of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given its colored people a bad check, a check that has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and security of justice.

We have also come to his hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is not time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.

- Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy.
- Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.
- Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick-sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.
- Now is the time to make justice a reality to all of God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of it's colored citizens. This sweltering summer of the colored people's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.

Nineteen sixty-three is not an end but a beginning. Those who hope that the colored Americans needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual.

By Rev. Dr. Martin Luther Kin Jr.

There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the colored citizen is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

- We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities.
- We cannot be satisfied as long as the colored person's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one.
- We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "for white only."
- We cannot be satisfied as long as a colored person in Mississippi cannot vote and a colored person in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of your trials and tribulations. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by storms of persecutions and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our modern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you, my friends, we have the difficulties of today and tomorrow.

- I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.
- I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.
- I have a dream that one day out in the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.
- I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.
- I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by their character.
- I have a dream today.
- I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; that one day right down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.
- I have a dream today.
- I have a dream that one day every valley shall be engulfed, every hill shall be exalted and every mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I will go back to the South with.

- With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.
- With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.
- With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to climb up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my father's died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!
And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

- Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado.
- Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that, let freedom, ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.
- Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi and every mountainside.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every tenement and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. ThankGod Almighty, we are free at last."

InfectedAffected**Negative**Positive**LongTermSurvivor**NewlyDiagnosed

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On The Cover

Sex appeal

Shawn Muckers' Got Lots Of Sex appeal

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JANUARY 2004

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In Atlanta, Georgia

R & R ENTERTAINMENT & CLUB M-MAGES PRESENTS

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1/2 off admission with any Football Team Jersey. Hip-Hop (Mainroom) and House with **DJ Rick** — **Sexy Towel Dancers hourly** - Doors Open @ 10pm

FRIDAY - JANUARY 16TH

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The Grand Opening Of An All New House Room

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The 544 GO-GO BOYZ - **Lights go out @ 2am** .Glowsticks & Whistles provided when you enter
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SATURDAY - JANUARY 17TH

House Classics Dance Party

ENOUGH SAID! Hosted by Club M-Mage - Doors Open @ 10pm

SUNDAY - JANUARY 18TH

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PREPARE TO BE TOTALLY ENTERTAINED. Hip-Hop and House Music

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Doors Open @ 7pm - until - Showtime 10pm

2 DANCE FLOORS - 5 ROOMS - 2 LOUNGE AREAS
POOL ROOM CHILL OUT ROOM - FULL KITCHEN
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DIRECTIONS TO THE CLUB:

FROM DOWNTOWN AND THE SOUTH - Take 75/85N to Spring Street exit, go to 2nd light and make left onto West Peachstreet, make right turn @ the very next light, which is North Avenue, proceed approximately 7 blocks past Glen Iris Street and make a right turn @ very next street - Angier Avenue (Club Masquerade sits on the corner), club will be on your right hand side at the other end of the block.....

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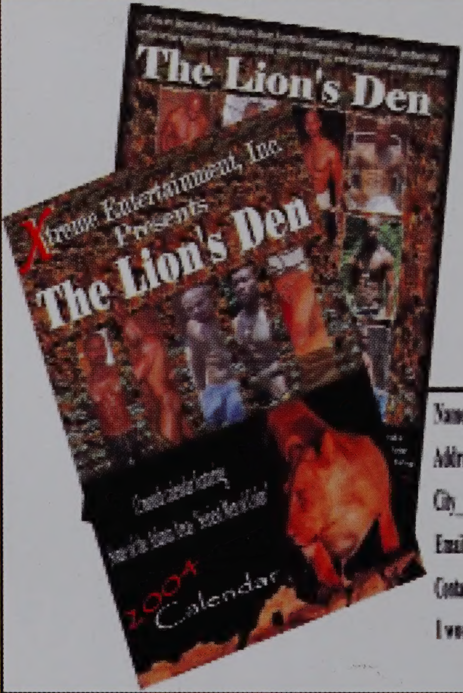

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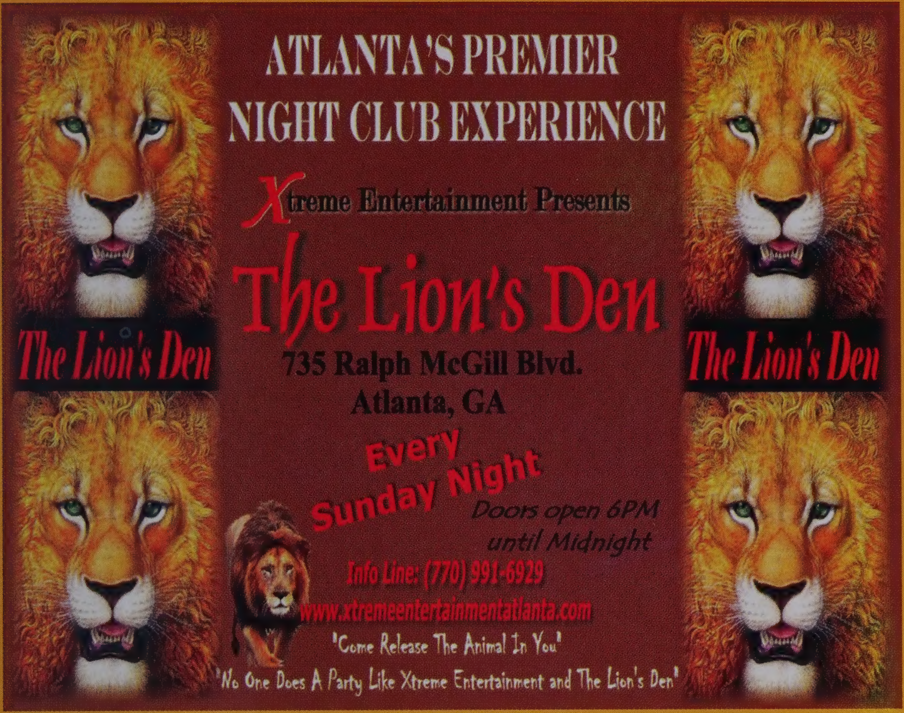

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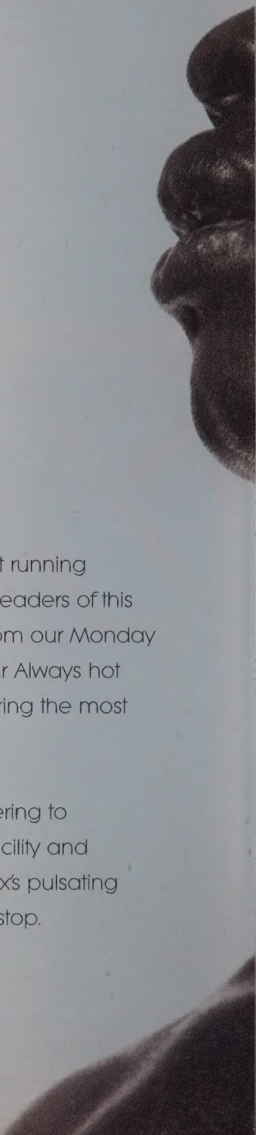

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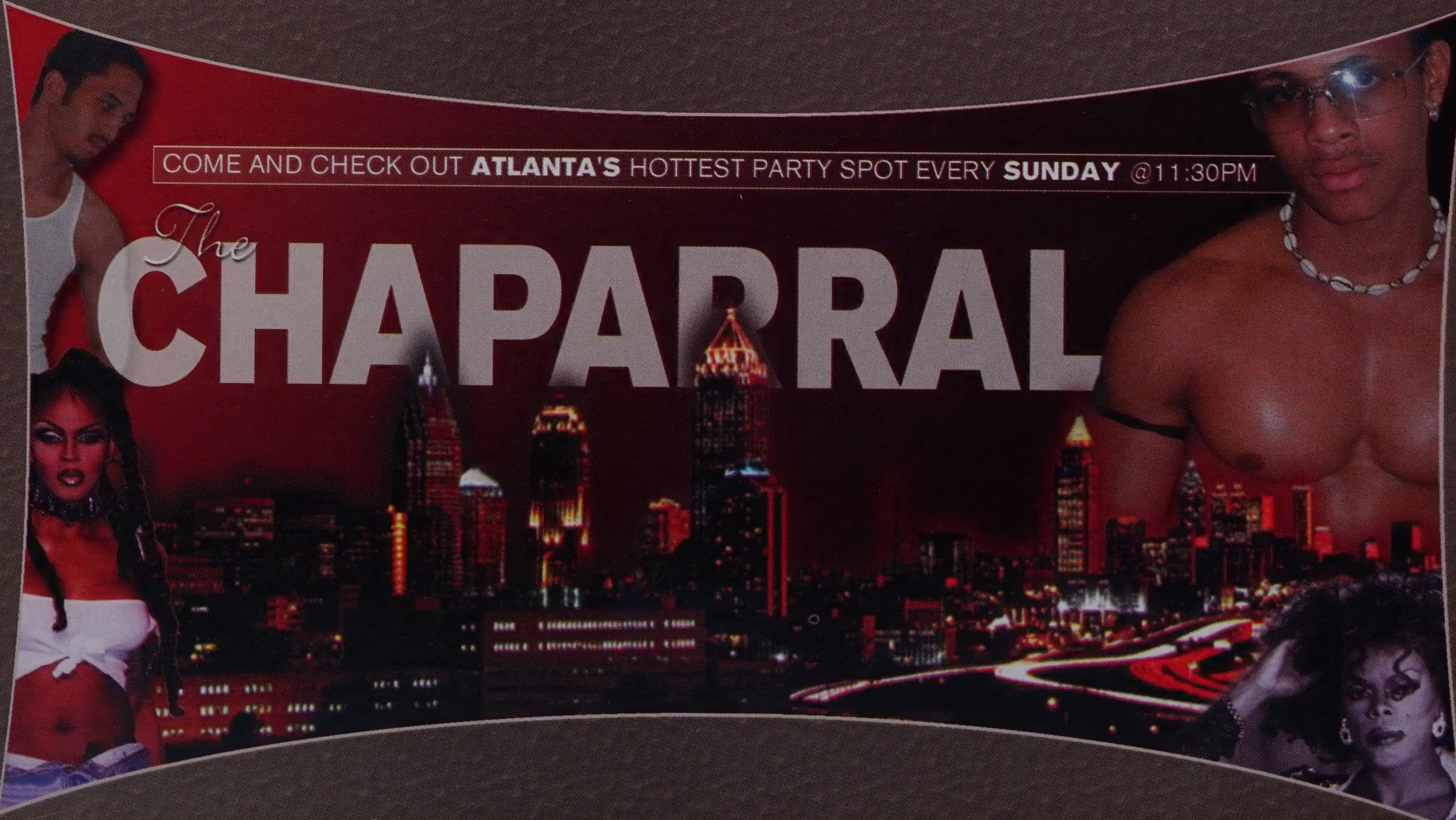

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HIP-HOP AND HOUSE MUSIC
DOORS OPEN @ 10PM
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FRIDAY NIGHT - JANUARY 16TH
LADIES NIGHT
FOR ALL MY SEXY LADIES
COME PARTY TIL 4AM
DOORS OPEN @ 10PM
MINI-SHOW @ MIDNIGHT

SATURDAY NIGHT - JANUARY 17TH
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DRINK, DANCE AND PARTY TIL 4AM
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MON-WED [6PM - MIDNIGHT]
FREE ADMISSION
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ALSO A PLACE FOR YOUR CARD
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JAN 15TH - 18TH

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On the Big Screen

50 FIRST DATES RELEASE 1/16/04

A veterinarian (Adam Sandler) falls for a woman (Drew Barrymore) who suffers from short-term memory loss. Because of her condition, every day their love is new — literally. He must woo her again and again or she will forget that he's the one for her.

ADAM SANDLER
DREW BARRYMORE
Imagine having to win over the girl of your dreams every friggin' day
50 FIRST DATES

ALONG CAME POLLY RELEASE 1/16/04

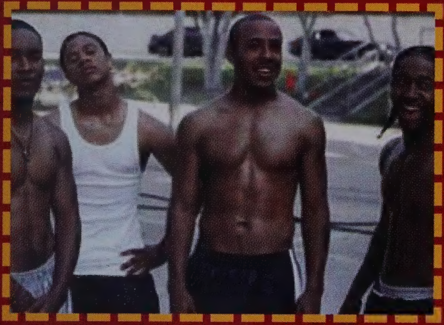
Ruben (Ben Stiller) watches his wife, Lisa (Debra Messing), run off with a French man (Hank Azaria) on their honeymoon, and then sadly returns to New York City, where he works at an insurance company. Ruben is behind his company's flawless risk-analysis software, but he also uses it to manage his life, so he's a bit gun-shy when he meets a new woman, Polly Prince (Jennifer Aniston).

TORQUE RELEASE 1/16/04

Biker Cary Ford (Martin Henderson) returns to town to reunite with his girlfriend, Shane (Monet Mazur). Henry (Matt Schulze), leader of the Hellions gang, is after Cary because he stole some bikes that had drugs stored in the gas tanks. Henry frames Cary for the murder of Junior, the younger brother of Trey (Ice Cube), who heads up another gang, the Reapers.

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

RELEASE 1/23/04 Ashton Kutcher stars as an emotionally conflicted man dealing with suppressed childhood memories. Cleverly enough, he discovers a way to travel back in time, but his different actions in the past have enormous ramifications for his future/present. And every time he heads back in time to fix the problems he's created, things invariably get worse.



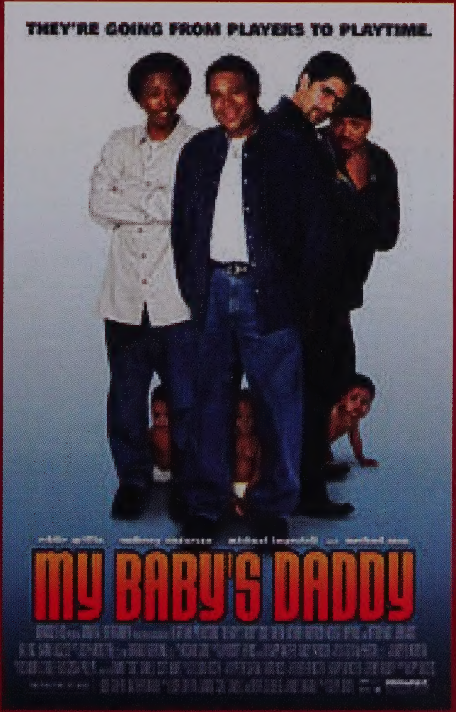
YOU GOT SERVED RELEASE 1/30/04

Set in the world of competitive hip-hop street dancing, the story is about two friends, David (Omarion) and Elgin (Houston), who are the best duo in town. But their reputations and friendship end up on the line when they face serious competition and are challenged in the biggest event of the year.

BARBASHOP 2 RELEASE 1/30/04

Since the original Barbershop was a surprise hit, earning $75 million in the U.S. alone, MGM put plans for a sequel in motion. Expect more tales in Chicago's South Side, at the legendary barbershop run by Calvin Palmer (Ice Cube). Queen Latifah will play the owner of a nearby beauty salon.

ADVERTISMENT


THEY'RE GOING FROM PLAYERS TO PLAYTIME.
MY BABY'S DADDY

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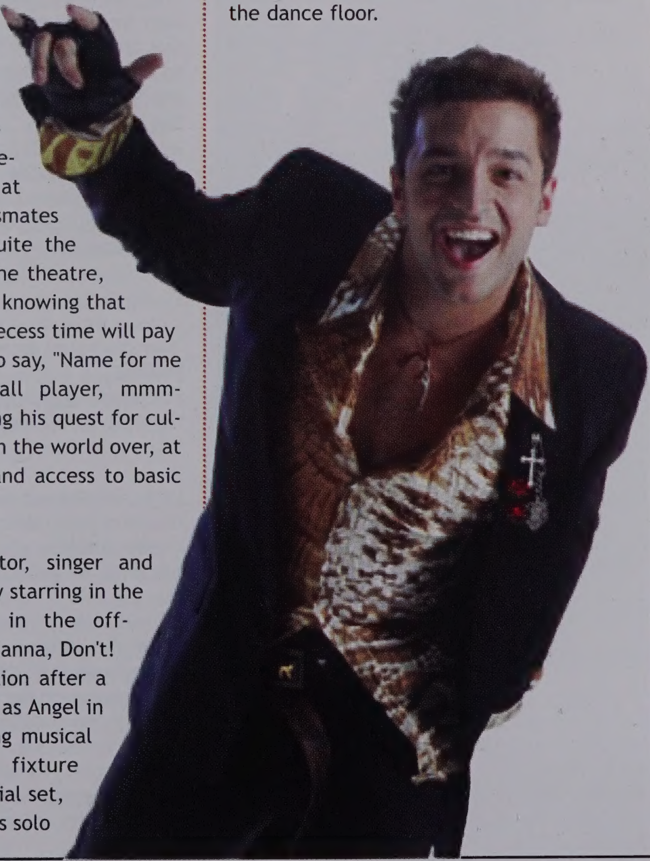
Queer Eye: Jai Rodriguez

Hot Celeb Of The Month

It's recess at an exclusive boys school on glamorous Long Island. The other fourth graders are running and yelling and hurling dodge balls at one another. Where's little Jai Rodriguez? He's in the band room, alone, finalizing the choreography for his first one-man show, J.J.: Live at Lunch. Most of his classmates haven't yet exuded quite the same enthusiasm for the theatre, but Jai takes solace in knowing that someday all that lost recess time will pay off. (As he was heard to say, "Name for me ONE famous dodge-ball player, mmm-kay?") Now Jai is sharing his quest for culture and style with men the world over, at least those with TVs and access to basic cable.

Jai is a talented actor, singer and dancer who is currently starring in the lead role of Zanna in the off-Broadway musical hit Zanna, Don't! Jai joined the production after a long stint on Broadway as Angel in the Tony Award-winning musical Rent. Jai is also a fixture among the hip NYC social set, regularly performing his solo act in the newest and hottest nightspots. On Queer Eye, Jai uses all aspects of his professional training and skills as a performer plus his social charisma to coach straight subjects on everything from mixing 'n mingling in a social setting, to conversation skills, and to being at ease on the dance floor.

Cast Members Of Queer Eye For The Straight Guy. Program Airs On The Bravo Network Every Tuesday.



DISCOVERING THE TECHNOLOGICAL Advancement of Dating

I have taken the stance that I am going to be more proactive and assertive in regards to my dating life. After a 3-year hiatus, I have returned to corporate America and my schedule does not sometimes allow for an active social life therefore, I have to take advantage of all the avenues available to me. I decided to utilize an online dating service. Initially I thought about what people and my friends might say, but in the end technology won the battle over my ego.

The way that people communicate online is very interesting to me. For example, there was the guy from Dallas, TX that responded to my ad and within the first two paragraphs professed that he would like for us to become "friends," that he wanted to move away from Dallas because of all the fake people and he needed to get me as soon as possible. I wasn't sure how to respond to this so in a roundabout way, I politely declined and wished him well in his search for love. Then there was the guy that responded to my ad like this:

"Sup man cool attractive thick bro checking you out.
Friendship/relationship orientated
Gainfully/professionally employed
Hit me up man."

Upon logging on and reading this, my first reaction was "delete." But then I thought maybe this was why I am single. Was I being too hard on people? Was I a snob? When I saw the word "orientated" instead of oriented and then "professional" but yet he did not know the difference between the two.... I immediately thought yuck! Then I looked at his approach to me the "sup man" and "hit me up man" and wondered what this was about. Nowhere in my profile did I remotely hint that I use this kind of hyper-masculine, pseudo-straight man vernacular. So, why did this brother approach me like this? After some contemplation on my part, I knew why. It was because of the "DL" fad that has swept the country. Most of these people have attached themselves to this identity because they don't know who they are as men (let alone gay men) and rather than be a man of their own convictions they find it easier to conform to what is popular. In two words, it's called "peer pressure." But my dilemma was not; does this man fit into this category? My dilemma was should I respond and take the time to find out?

Way too often do we dismiss potentially good mates because of our own hang-ups that we need to get over. So, I decided that I would pose the question to my friends and let them decide whether or not I should respond. The majority of my friends agreed that I was being way too hard on this man. Most of them cited that people make careless and harmless mistakes when emailing and I should not allow that to be the deciding factor for the kind of person he is. I agreed with them. There was however one of my friends that agreed with my initial reaction. He quoted Maya Angelou saying, "When a person shows you or tells you who they are, believe them the first time." I agreed with him too. Somewhere in between both of these opinions was a balance.

The balance for me was to respond to his email and try to create a dialogue. I made a conscious effort to ask questions that would allow me to try to get to know the person. I asked questions like how old was he, where was he from, what he like to do for fun.... you know the same questions that are asked when you meet someone in everyday normal situations. I think that I asked a total of four questions and I put an "etc." on the end that I thought would indicate to him to elaborate on anything else he deemed appropriate. I asked four questions and four answers were what I got. Clearly he did not get it. At this point I was at my wits end and clicked "delete."

With all of the technological advancements like, blackberries, cell phones, and two-ways, online dating is just another way to keep us connected. I thought (and still think) that online dating would be another avenue to open myself up to meeting new people that I may want to date. The thing that I never considered is that while technology is constantly evolving and advancing... people remain the same.

Scott A. Bogan
clikquescott@aol.com

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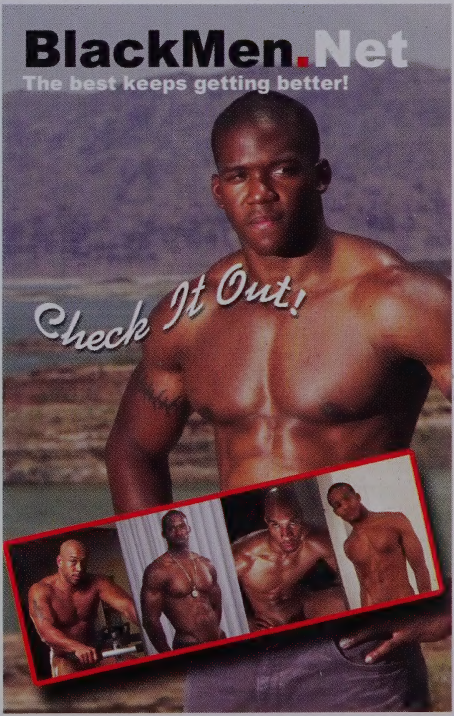
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Check It Out!

Getting Into The Art Of Tattooing

Maybe your lover thinks tattoos are hot. Maybe you're an activist with a message for everyone to see. Maybe it's simply a Popeye fetish. Either way, getting a tattoo can be a big decision, and there are several things to consider before going under the needle.

What Is It?

Tattooing is a tradition of puncturing the skin and placing dye underneath it to create images or words made of ink. It started around 4000 B.C. in Ancient Egypt, and has since spread throughout the globe, taking on a myriad of meanings. The Burmese in 2000 B.C. incorporated tattooing into their magic. The Greeks used special tattoos for their spies. King Harold of Great Britain, in an everlasting romantic gesture, tattooed "Edith" above his heart. But before you rush out to emblazon your beloved's name on your backside, keep in mind that this procedure is a permanent one, and even with today's technology, removing it may not be as simple as you think.

Luckily, there is another option: The temporary tattoo. Applied to the top of your skin, instead of being injected underneath, the dye lasts anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks.

Henna, a popular type of temporary tattoo, is a small shrub found in the Middle East. First used around 5000 B.C. for its natural healing properties, Henna has since been a popular body decoration in many cultures. A tattoo artist creates a Henna paste, which he or she then paints onto your skin. Depending on the skill of the artist, designs can be extremely intricate and beautiful. The application is painless, and the paste dries soon there-after, leaving a brownish-red hued tattoo that lasts for up to twelve days before fading.

The other option for a temporary fix is the store-bought tattoo. Choose a ready-made design, press it against your skin and rub a little water on top. Voila! All it takes to remove this type of tattoo is a few good scrubbings.

How is it done?

If you're in the market for a permanent tattoo, head to your neighborhood tattoo parlor. The tattoo artist will point out many designs to choose from. And when you're ready, he or she will use a needle to inject dye underneath your skin.

If your mind's not made up, try a Henna or store-bought tattoo, both of which are temporary. Henna, a small shrub found in the Middle East, is made into a paste that is painted onto your skin. It dries into a brownish-red hue that lasts for about twelve days before fading. You can go to a Henna artist, or buy a kit and try your own designs! If Henna's not your thing, take a look at the store-bought kind. They come with a ready-made designs that you place onto your skin and wet. This tattoo lasts for a few days, and a few good scrubbings will usually remove it.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 62

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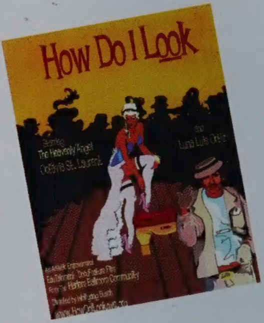
BY DWIGHT POWELL

Picking Put Where "Paris Is Purning" Left Of Comes

HOW DO I LOOK



"Paris Is Burning," a groundbreaking documentary produced by Jenny Livingston In 1990, introduced the world to the gay-subculture, known as the "Ballroom" community that had been transcending the nights of Harlem for years. Now almost 14 years later, the world will again become reacquainted with the Xtravaganzas, Ninjas, Pendavis', Xaviers and all of the other "children" in "HOW DO I LOOK."

"HOW DO I LOOK" is an EduTainment / DocuFeature film about the ballroom scene which has progressed greatly from 1990's "Paris Is Burning." The film, directed by long-time supporter of the ballroom community, Wolfgang Busch, features interviews with several legendary House members from across the country discussing everything from the effect of AIDS within the community, to the transgender movement, to the evolution of vogueing.

This time however, the ballroom community is much more involved in the final outcome of the project. This film is intent on differentiating itself from "Paris" by emphasizing the fact that many voguers have jobs, educational goals, and healthy relationships with their biological families. "My 'children' work, go to school and come to the balls for fun," said producer Kevin Ultra Omni. "The other film didn't talk about that." Also, unlike "Paris," proceeds from the royalties will be shared with the ballroom community and LGBT community- based organizations.

Director Wolfgang Busch promises that the film will include some prime runway performances. "Paris" veterans David Ultima and Octavia St. Laurent will strut their stuff once again, alongside Legendary Newcomers such as Mohammad Omni and Andre Givenchy (Formally André Mizrahi, Clikque December 2000 Cover Model).

"How Do I Look," speaks powerfully about the passing on of three generations of Harlem "Ballroom" traditions and family values from legends such as Dorian Corey, Avis Pendavis, Anji Xtravaganza, Marcel Christian, Eriq Christian Bazaar, Ross Infiniti, Tracy Africa, David Ultima, Alvernian

BY DWIGHT POWELL

Style, Grace & Face

Prestige, Jose Xtravaganza, Andre Givenchy, Willi Ninja, Jamal Balenciaga, Mystery Dior, Stanley Angel, Harmonica Sunbeam, Emanuel Xavier, Rickey Revlon, Selvyn Givenchy, Jack Givenchy, MASHALA, Anthony Revlon, Gerard Gaskin, Roxy Latex and China Blue Latex.

It presents a potent real life representation of the strong bonds and lives of the "families" and personalities within the "ballroom community." The sense of family values is addressed by Octavia's father Billy Austin, Kevin Omni, Shawn Eminence, Monica Continental and lesbian Jaimee Balenciaga. We come to understand the personal struggles of the late Pepper Labeija, the founder of the first original House, as we have come to know them today, the House of Labeija and Luna Luis Ortiz Khan. And Carmen Xtravaganza, Octavia St. Laurent, Angie Infiniti and Jazmine Givenchy open a whole new world to us through Transgender education. Additionally, Junior Labeija and R.R Chanel and Jose Xtravaganza detail the very shocking reality of substance abuse, in the community.

All combined these stories show the true nature of real people struggling to find acceptance and happiness in an often unfriendly world; and chronicles their efforts to raise their self-esteem through competition at events they call "Balls," to build recognition and ballroom status with the goal to become "Legendary" and to one day leave behind a legacy.

Along with the feature film (which is now in previews) the producers and promoters are offering a wide variety of "How Do I Look" items including a CD soundtrack, picture book and other merchandising are expected to generate royalties to empower members of the Ballroom community.

Donations in support of this project are greatly needed. In return we offer you credit at the end of the documentary.

For more information on how you can help visit
www.howdoilooknyc.org
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THANK YOU

Passion Marks

A NOVEL BY LEE HAYES

PASSION MARKS
LEE HAYES

A gifted young writer makes his literary debut in this haunting and powerful novel about a gay black man grappling with the death of his twin brother--and with the dream boyfriend who turns out to be the lover from hell. Victims of domestic abuse know that the violence they suffer at the hands of loved ones is not limited by gender, culture, sexual preference, or socio-economic status. Now first-time author Lee A. Hayes takes this hot-button issue to gripping new levels in a novel that transcends all barriers of sex, class, and race. "From the outside, it looked like the perfect world: exclusive neighborhood, fancy cars, and wealth. If only they knew..." Set in Texas, Passion Marks tells the story of Kevin Davis, an attractive, college-educated black man who is leading an agonizing double life. The fashionable Houston home Kevin shares with his partner might as well have bars on the windows, for all the freedom he enjoys. For behind closed doors, he lives a sordid and humiliating existence as the kept lover of powerful businessman James Lancaster, a vicious closet abuser. Compounding Kevin's torment is the guilt he harbors over the recent death of his identical twin brother, Keevan. Haunted by apocalyptic visions and terrified of the man he'd once hoped could save him, Kevin is unable to break the cycle of violence and depravity that has made him a prisoner in his own life--until an unforeseen event forces him to confront the demons that are holding him back and call on a strength he didn't know he possessed. Building to an unforgettable climax, and peopled by a cast of richly drawn characters--including Kevin's best girlfriend, Danea, and the mercilessly driven James--this is a powerhouse story of tough love from a supremely talented new author.

Clikque Magazine was given approval to reprint the entire first chapter of the novel. Enjoy!

The black cordless phone slammed against the right side of my face with such force that it sent my entire body reeling over the white sofa. I rolled over it and onto the coffee table, shattering the glass top. Instantly, my face went numb. I lay on the floor in a daze, trying to ascertain the extent of the damage: the pain was intense. I rubbed my face with my hands while I tried to ignore the warm feel of blood as it oozed out of my back and soaked my shirt. When I found the strength, I looked above me and saw him looming like a volcano suddenly compelled to erupt. His savagely contorted face burned with the fire of his words and the anger that dripped from his thick breath. When I attempted to sit up, I felt his shoe in my chest, kicking me back to the carpet. His words failed to convey any meaning through the depth of my pain, but the anger on his face spoke volumes. I closed my eyes, praying this nightmare would end; instead of ending, his body suddenly pressed down on my chest, and unrelenting fists pounded my face. I tried to shield my face from his blows with my arms, even while his frame weighed heavily upon me.

By this time, my lungs were on the verge of collapse and I gasped desperately for air. I was far too weak to force him off me, and when I struck him in the eye with my fist, it only made him pound harder. Through his anger, and between the unbroken chains of profanity, he yelled something about blood on the carpet, as if it was my fault, and then pulled me up from where I lay like a rag doll. He stood me up so I could look directly in his brown eyes, and then he slapped me so hard across the face that I crashed into the wall, narrowly escaping the flames of the fireplace. Just as he raced toward me, I stood up, and with all the force I could muster, I slammed my fist into his face. He stumbled. I threw my body into him with the force of a linebacker. He tried to withstand the force, but he lost his balance, and we both tumbled onto the floor. His head hit the side of the entertainment center, and blood began to run down his face from the open wound. I pounded his face with my fist, and then slammed his head onto the floor repeatedly like a man possessed. He looked worn out. It was over.

I rolled off him and onto my back, taking a moment to breathe as I looked up at the ceiling. Slowly, I moved away from him. That's when I felt his fist connect with the back of my head. He plowed into me like a truck from behind, and I flew into the fifty-gallon aquarium, shattering the glass and sending the helpless fish to the floor. They flipped and flopped, gasping for air; within moments they'd be dead. He grabbed my left leg and pulled me with ease across the carpet, unmoved by my struggle for freedom. My attempt at liberation from his massive hands proved futile, and he continued dragging me across the white carpet, leaving behind a trail the color red.

When we reached the staircase, he gave my body a tremendous yank to assert his control. With sudden prowess, he moved behind me, pushed my body down, and forced my stomach into the stairs. I could feel his gigantic hands on the back of my neck as he pressed my face into the carpet. I was pinned down, unable to move. He ripped off my blood-stained shirt and tossed it aside. As he whispered something in my ear, his hands grabbed my ass. The heat of his breath scalding my neck was far worse than the words he spoke. He grabbed me by the waist and raised my body up just enough for him to undo my belt. As he pulled down my pants and underwear in one swift motion, I braced myself. His accelerated breathing became louder and louder in anticipation. I tried to prepare myself for the violation. I knew that he would do everything in his power to make it hurt—to make me scream for mercy. He had a special affinity for delivering pain. This time I would deny him the perverse pleasure of hearing me scream.

Behind me, I heard him unzip his pants; that was the catalyst that brought tears to my eyes. I would not let them fall. My tears would only add to his callous joy, so I withheld them. My legs were then forced apart, and I knew there was no turning back. With his arm still pressed against the back of my neck, and my face forcibly held against the floor, I felt his thick flesh force its way into me, connecting in a vile union. The pain of that first thrust when it broke through my barrier almost caused me to let out a loud scream, but I held it in. His bursts rocked my body, and the pain increased the longer he stayed in me. I reached my hands behind my back and tried to push him off me, but my effort proved pointless. He pushed harder and harder, while his inhuman grunts filled the room, like the howl of a wolf in the darkness of night. The force of his thrusts rolled my body back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, for what seemed like an endless moment in time. My face dug deeper into the stair, and the burn from the carpet on my face was becoming painful. His panting was vicious, much like an animal that suddenly realized the extent of its power and its victory. All the while, his voice shouted despicable words, and with each debilitating push from his body into mine, his voice became louder. This had to end. All of the hurt my body suffered now went to my head, and I could feel myself losing consciousness. He turned my head toward him, forcing me to look into his hollow eyes. Blood stained his face. His muscles inside of me began to contract, and I knew it would be over soon. He pushed harder, faster, harder, and still faster, until I felt the release of his hot fluids. He pulled out of my body while still enjoying his

CAPTER 1 CONTINUES ON PAGE 56

CHAPTER 1 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

eruption. His juices spilled on my back, and then rolled down my side. It was over. From behind, he wrapped his hands around my waist and pulled me into his powerful chest. He held me there for a few seconds, gently kissed the back of my neck, and released me. "Clean up this mess," he said as he motioned toward the war-torn room. He climbed over me, and made his way up the staircase. When I looked up, I saw the back of his naked body reach the top of the stairs and disappear into darkness.

There were no words with enough power to capture the way I felt. I remained laying face down in the carpet, naked except for one sock dangling off my foot, unwilling—perhaps unable—to move. I felt stinging sensations pulsating on my back from the glass still buried beneath my skin. I tried to check my back to see if it had stopped bleeding, but I really wasn't concerned about those cuts; my attention was singularly focused on bigger issues. My entire body, wrapped in a throbbing blanket of pain, felt limp. After a few deep breaths, I managed to regain some control of my tattered frame, and forced myself to slide slowly to the bottom of the staircase, where I pulled my knees into my chest, and rested in the corner like a small child hiding from monsters under the bed. The sweet smell of jasmine still clung in the air, much like a damp mist over a lake in the early morning. With my right hand, I caressed my face--the swelling had already begun. I needed to crawl into the kitchen to get some ice, but that distance seemed unconquerable. The dimly lit house, once full of noise, now sat quiet as if the weakened sky had nothing left to give after its storm. The only audible sounds came from the rain lightly pounding against the windows, and the murmur of the rolling thunder. The lightning flashes offered a brief illumination, but I longed for the darkness to bury my shame.

The entire evening replayed in my head like a big-screen horror movie. I paid close attention to the details to see if I could figure out where it went wrong. Alluring candles, sweet incense, and a basket full of fabulous seafood in front of the fireplace. Sexy love ballads from the stereo, expensive wine, and vases full of freshly cut colorful roses all over the house. It all seemed so perfect. James and I had held each other closely while staring seductively in each other's eyes; this was the man that I adored. The evening conversation had been full of love and comforting smiles. His soothing caresses had brought me to the ultimate state of relaxation. I thought the dark days were long behind us, forever sealed by the hands of time. For the first time in months, it seemed that we could be the happy couple I envisioned.

This wasn't the first time I had felt his fists and been burned by his quick temper. Throughout the course of our relationship, violence was not uncommon, especially during his times of stress related to his firm, Lancaster Computer Systems. A year ago LCS made an acquisition of a smaller computer firm in Austin; this transaction brought out the worst in James. Some nights when he came home, I feared for my safety, and at times, for my life, not knowing what to expect when he walked through the door. It was like rolling the dice.

Partly, it was my fault. I knew this. Sometimes, maybe out of boredom, I would intentionally antagonize him just to get a reaction. I wanted to see how far I could push him. I wanted to know whether or not I had the power to make him lose control. During stressful times, instead of being supportive and appreciative, I managed to say or do the wrong thing. But this attack was by far one of the most vicious outbursts I'd suffered at his hands.

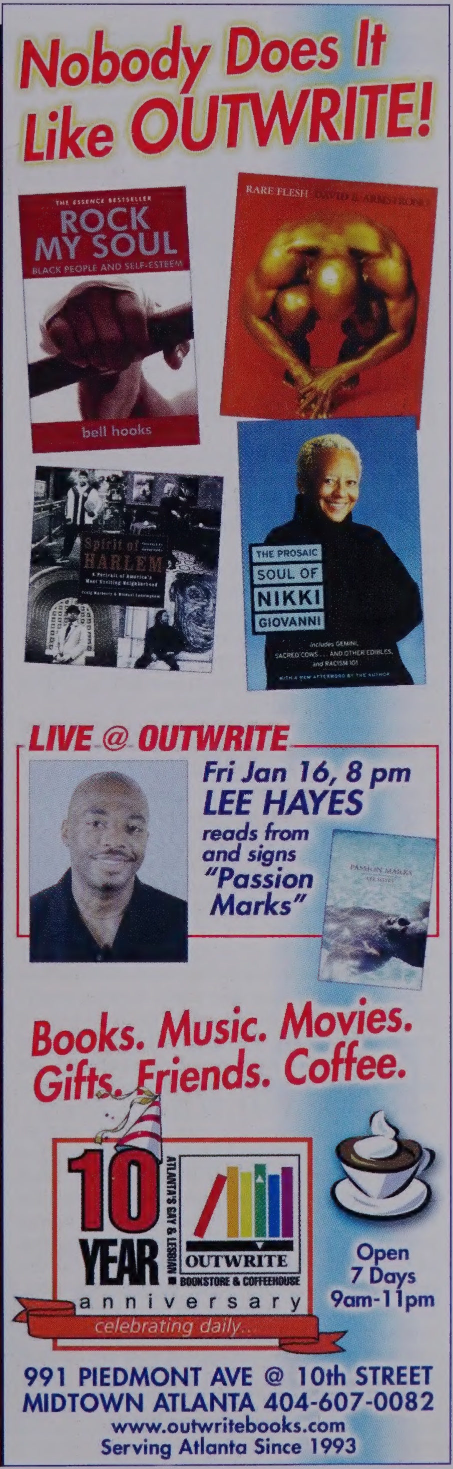
Over and over again, I replayed the evening. The phone rang and he picked up. While he was on the phone, I decided to go into the kitchen for more wine, and when I returned something in him had changed. He seemed irritable and ended the phone call by slamming the phone on its base. As I approached him, the phone rang again. I answered it without thinking. By the time I heard his commands to let it ring, it was too late. I should have noticed the look on his face. I should have heard his words. I should not have let anything interrupt the mood. He stood up and held his hand out for the phone, and I innocently gave it to him. That's when everything changed. It was my fault. If only I hadn't answered that call. If only I had listened to him. I would have to start paying more attention to his needs. The phone call could have waited.

As I dragged myself up from the corner with considerable effort, I wondered how many men and women were in situations similar to mine. The lyrics to that old song "How Could You Hurt the One You Love?" came to mind. I managed to limp slowly to the restroom without losing my balance. I held a firm grip on the black sink for support, and when I flipped the light switch on, I let out a shriek as I looked at the broken and tattered image that stood before me in the mirror. Surely, this wasn't me. The mirror played a cruel joke. My eyes were beginning to close from the swelling, and bloodstains covered my face. My swollen lips pulsated with a heavy pain. Numerous purple and black bruises covered my chest, and the gentlest touch of my passion marks caused a horrible sensation. Still holding onto the sink, I turned to examine my back in the mirror, but when I turned, a sudden explosion of pain enveloped my body. The room started to spin, and before I even realized what was happening, I collapsed to the floor in a fit of pain. The plush mauve rug did little to break my fall. I heard the sound and felt the thump as my head hit the porcelain tub, and everything went black.

"Sometimes, Kevin, you reap what you sow." I was startled by the familiar voice and when I opened my eyes the apparition stood before me, part flesh and part fantasy, and then vanished into the darkness.

"Keevan? Where are you?" I asked in fright. My heart palpitated with the rapid speed of hummingbird wings and it felt as if it would beat through my chest.

"I came back." I followed the voice into the den. Keevan stood there, dressed in the same clothing he wore when I found him dead. I walked slowly toward him, with carefully chosen steps. "I'm your brother. I came back." His words haunted me and his expressions taunted me while his eyes mocked, offering no absolution. He vanished in the same mystery that allowed him to come forth.



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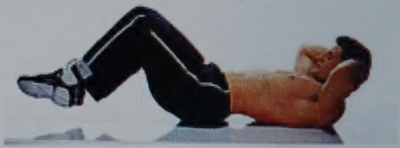
Created by our staff experts, the abdominal giant set encompasses five different exercises, each aimed to hit a different area of the midsection. When you first try the giant set, do eight reps of each exercise. Since one of these (the side crunch) involves separate right-side and left-side movements, your total number of continuous reps for the giant set comes to 48–and that's a lot. Yet it's not nearly as difficult as doing 48 straight reps of any of the five individual exercises would be. The reason is simple: Each of the exercises initiates the muscle contraction from a different spot and angle, thereby evenly distributing the workload. (Nevertheless, if you're a beginner, you may want to practice each of the five exercises individually, to get down the correct form, before you stack them together.)

After completing the five-exercise cycle, rest no more than a minute and a half. Then do another cycle, rest another minute and a half, and finish your workout with yet another five-exercise cycle. Perform the full workout twice during your first week on the program, then bump it up to three times beginning in Week Two for the remaining five weeks. Also, increase the number of reps per exercise by two each week, unless you hit a mini-plateau, in which case you can wait a week before upping your rep count.

REVERSE CRUNCH



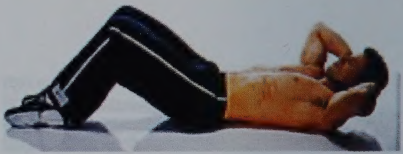
Start Position

Lie faceup on a floor mat—or in the sand if you're on a desert island. Raise your head and upper shoulders off the mat just slightly and lace the fingers of both hands together behind your head for support, keeping your elbows wide. Do not bend your head toward your chest; keep it perpendicular to your upper torso as much as possible. Bend your knees 90 degrees, and raise your feet an inch or two above the mat.

Movement

Lift your knees in a smooth arc toward your head while keeping the rest of your body as still as possible. When your knees are directly above your upper abdomen, pause briefly, contract the abs, then reverse direction and lower your feet slowly back toward the floor, but do not let them touch down. Maintain constant tension in your stomach muscles.

CRUNCH TWIST



Start Position

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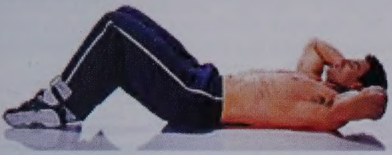
Movement

Contract your stomach muscles while at the same time twisting your torso to the left, so that your right elbow moves toward your left knee. Make sure to lift your left shoulder off the floor. Pause at the height of the movement, then return slowly to the starting position without allowing your working muscles to relax completely. Alternate between leftward and rightward twists for the recommended number of repetitions. (See introduction for rep counts.)

TRADITIONAL CRUNCH



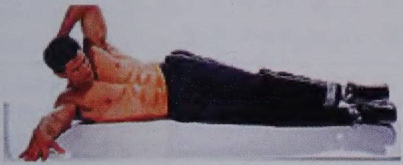
Start Position

Lie faceup on a floor mat—or in the sand if you're on a desert island. Raise your head and upper shoulders off the mat just slightly and lace the fingers of both hands together behind your head for support, keeping your elbows wide. Do not bend your head toward your chest; keep it perpendicular to your upper torso as much as possible. Bend your knees 90 degrees, and raise your feet an inch or two above the mat.

Movement

Contract your stomach muscles so that your upper torso curls toward your knees. Raise your shoulders off the floor, but keep your lower back flat against it. To avoid stressing your neck vertebrae, do not allow your hands to pull your head toward your chest. Keep your head fixed perpendicularly to your upper torso throughout the range of motion. When you reach full contraction, pause briefly and return to the starting position without letting your abdominal muscles relax completely.

Start Position

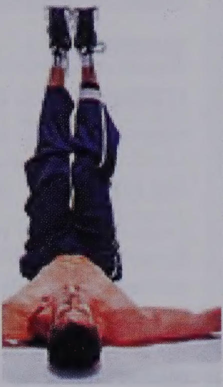


Lie on your right side with your legs straight and, for balance, extend your right arm along the floor at a right angle to your body. Cup your left hand behind your head, held a few inches above the floor, with your elbow pointing toward the ceiling. Throughout the movement, keep your head stationary; do not bend it or move it toward your feet.

Movement

While moving your upper torso toward your feet, contract the muscles on the left side of your torso so that your upper body curls in a smooth arc. At the same time, lift your legs upward (keeping the ankles together) as though you're trying to form a big "V." When your obliques are fully contracted, return slowly to the starting position. After doing the required number of reps for the left side of the body, reverse your position and do the same number of reps for the right side.

REVERSE TRUNK TWIST

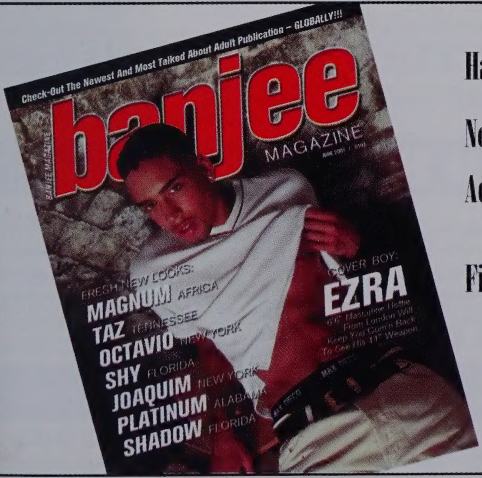


Start Position

Lie on your back with your arms extended along the floor for support, away from your body. Bend at the waist until your lower body is perpendicular to your upper torso. Bend your knees 90 degrees and lift your feet up until your shins are parallel to the floor.

Movement

Keeping your legs together and perpendicular to your upper torso, lower them toward the floor on your left side as far as possible. Keep your back flat on the ground. Resist gravity slightly to make the movement slow and controlled. When your feet are roughly two inches above the floor, gently reverse direction and return to the starting position. Repeat the motion to the opposite side. When your feet are back in the air again, that's one rep.



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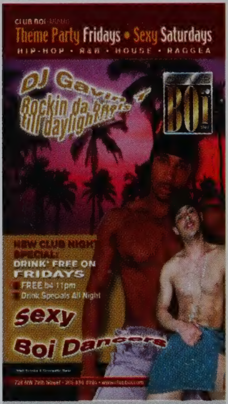
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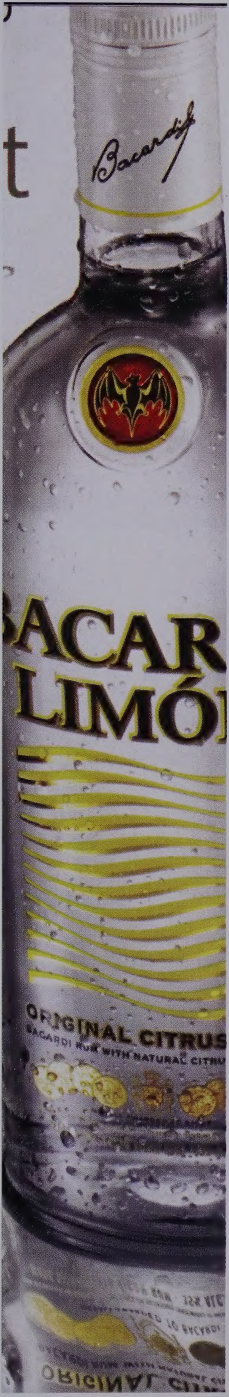

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

How much does it cost?

How much it costs depends on what you want to get. If you're looking for a cheap tattoo - and I mean cheap - scare up some change, hitch a ride to your local supermarket or mall and hit the vending machines. You're likely to find a tamely designed press-on temporary tattoo.

If you're hoping for Henna, be prepared to pay twenty dollars and up, depending on how large and detailed you'd like the design to be. If you're feeling artsy, you can find kits on the web for around 10 to 20 dollars. They usually include templates, an applicator tube, pre-mixed Henna paste and gloves.

For the real deal, el permanente, prepare to lay out at least 50 bucks for starters. Larger, more detailed or more colorful designs can run you into the hundreds, even thousands of dollars and can require multiple visits.

Important considerations

Temporary tattoos don't carry the health risks that permanent tattoos do, because the latter breaks through the skin, potentially exposing you to Hepatitis and HIV. And permanent tattoos hurt.

Luckily, there are guidelines that tattoo artists can follow to greatly reduce the chances of trouble. Ask them if they:

- wash their hands and wear latex gloves during the procedure
- use sterile, disposable needles that they open in front of their customers
- throw away ink caps, razors and stencils after every use
- use an autoclave (an intense heating process) to sterilize equipment, and have their autoclave inspected monthly
- sterilize the pigment bottles and the work area with bleach
- use an ultrasonic tank to rinse the tube and needle set from their tattoo machines

If you don't get a satisfactory response to these questions, or if you notice something disturbing, like a dirty work space, remember: you can walk away and find a better tattoo parlor.

One last thought about permanent tattoos: don't get one unless you want it forever. Yes, laser technology can help remove your tribute to "My Darling Peter" before it deflates your relationship with your new beau, Jay. But laser removal often requires multiple treatments, and the end result may only lighten your tattoo, or less often, leave you with an ugly scar.

Possible side effects

Pain and bleeding are common while you're getting your permanent tattoo, and scabbing is common afterward. For the first few days, use an antibiotic cream on your tattoo, and if it doesn't look infected, you can use cocoa butter for the remaining week or two until the scabbing subsides.

You may also experience an allergic reaction to the pigment dye. According to Jacob Baral, M.D., who practices tattoo removal in New York City, allergies include local swelling and itching. If you're concerned, ask your tattoo artist to test a tiny portion of your skin to see if there's a reaction before getting the tattoo. If you are allergic to a tattoo, the only way to stop the reaction is to have it removed!

Dangerous complications

The complications from an unsterile permanent tattoo procedure are almost unthinkable: you can contract HIV and Hepatitis B and C, among other bloodborne diseases. Transmission can occur if your tattoo artist injects you with a needle used on someone else. Hepatitis B can survive outside the body for days, increasing your chances of contracting it from a contaminated needle.

Luckily, transmission of disease through tattooing does not commonly occur.

How long is the healing process?

After you get a permanent tattoo, expect the healing process to take about two to three weeks. Bleeding is common during the procedure, and scabbing is common afterward. For the first few days, use an antibiotic cream on your tattoo, and if it doesn't look infected, you can use cocoa butter for the remaining week or two until the scabbing subsides.

The healing process for tatoo removal varies, depending on the tattoo.

How do you reverse it?

Laser surgery for tattoo removal often requires multiple treatments, depending on the colors in your tattoo. Visits are spaced about 10 days apart, during which time your doctor may use antibiotics and a special dressing over the treated area to help it heal.

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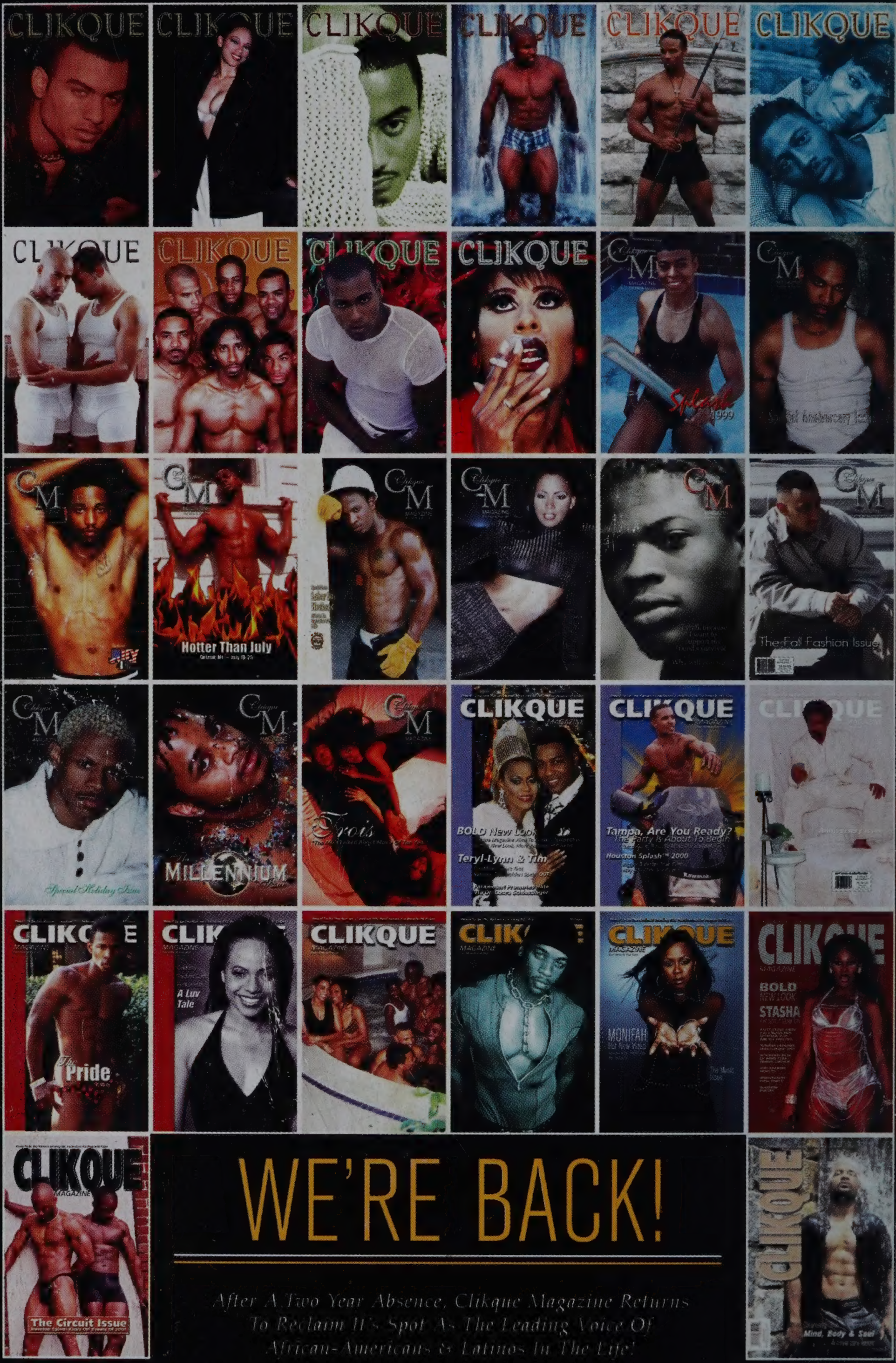
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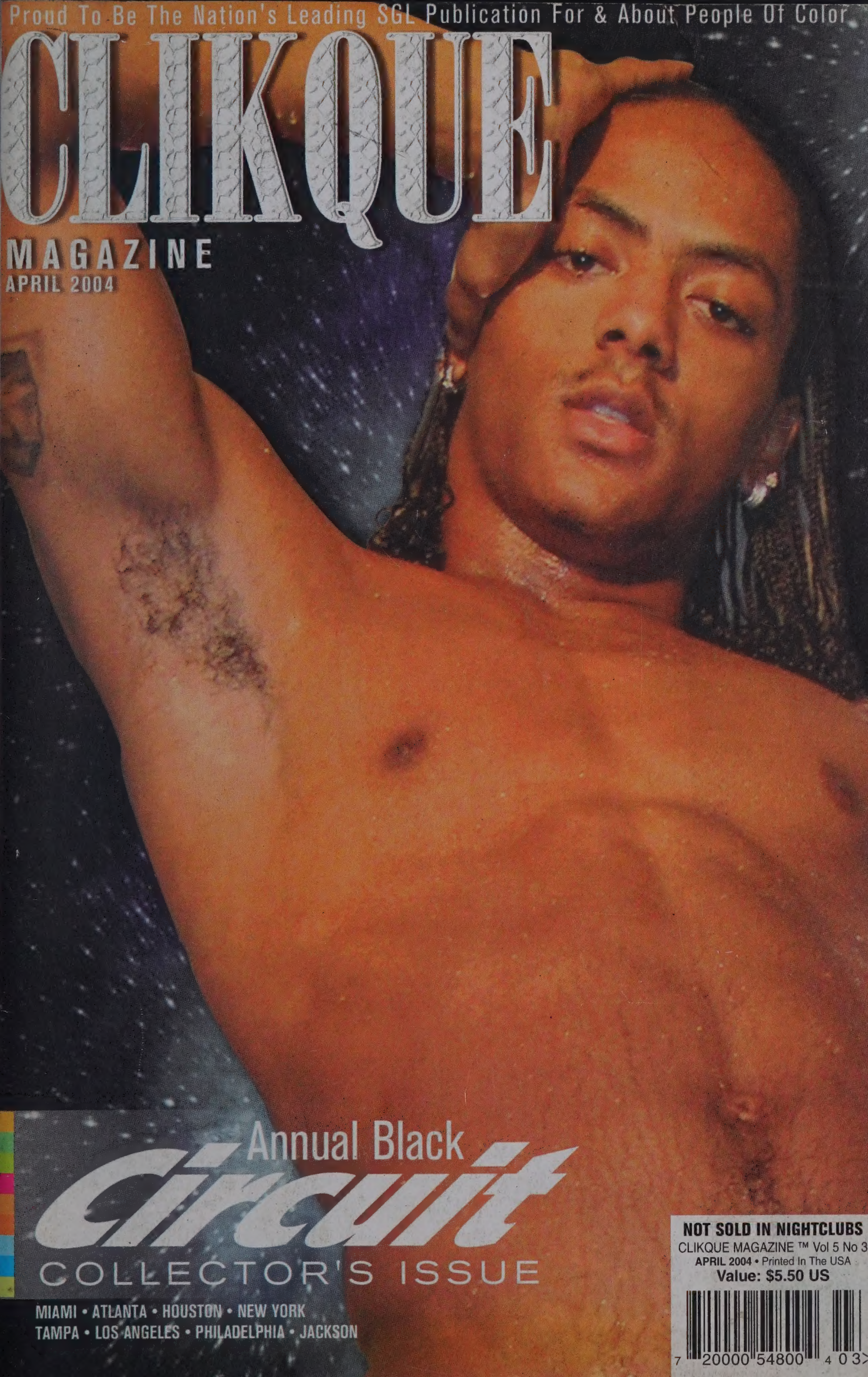

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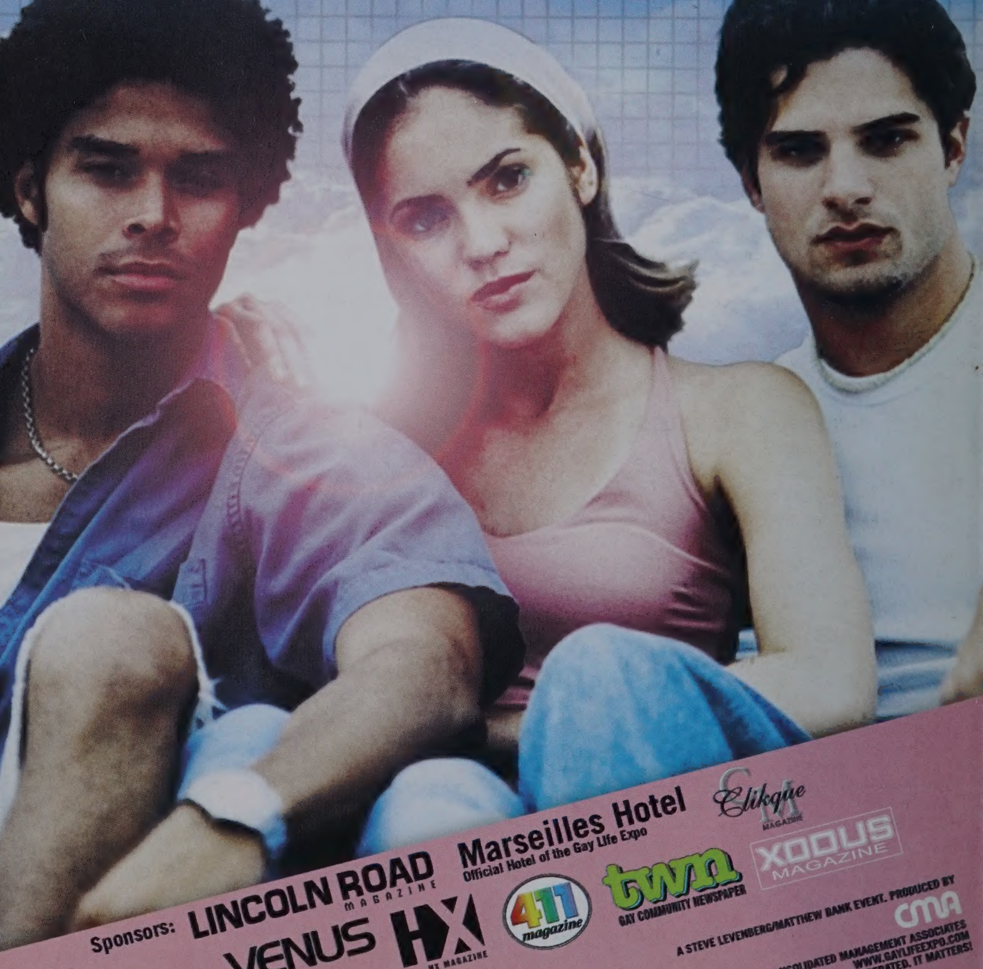

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EDITORIAL

Clikque MAGAZINE

Welcome to the Spring Black Pride edition of Clikque Magazine. As usual we have sought to bring you the very best of our community. We continue to look for submissions form current or aspiring artists to fill the pages of our greatest community resource. Let us recognize that we are all that we have. The insights and thoughts in the edition are complied to serve a s inspiration to us. We trust that you will enjoy this year's season of prides and parties with respect for yourself and others. Be yourself and everything else will fall into place.

Now you can find Clikque at most of your favorite hot spots or you can get a subscription. But you don't want to miss an issue. There will be no shortage of eye candy nor absence of thought provoking articles and inspirational messages. The latest in fashion, news, and our movement will keep you informed and prepared for action in our local and collective community.

Darryl Moch
Features Editor

Sincere thanks to the following individuals that have worked tirelessly for Clikque Magazine over the years. Thanks for continuing to support me to this day.

Dwight Powell
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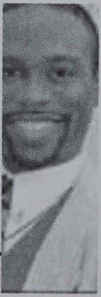

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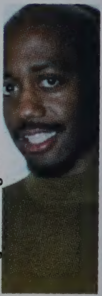

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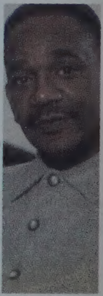

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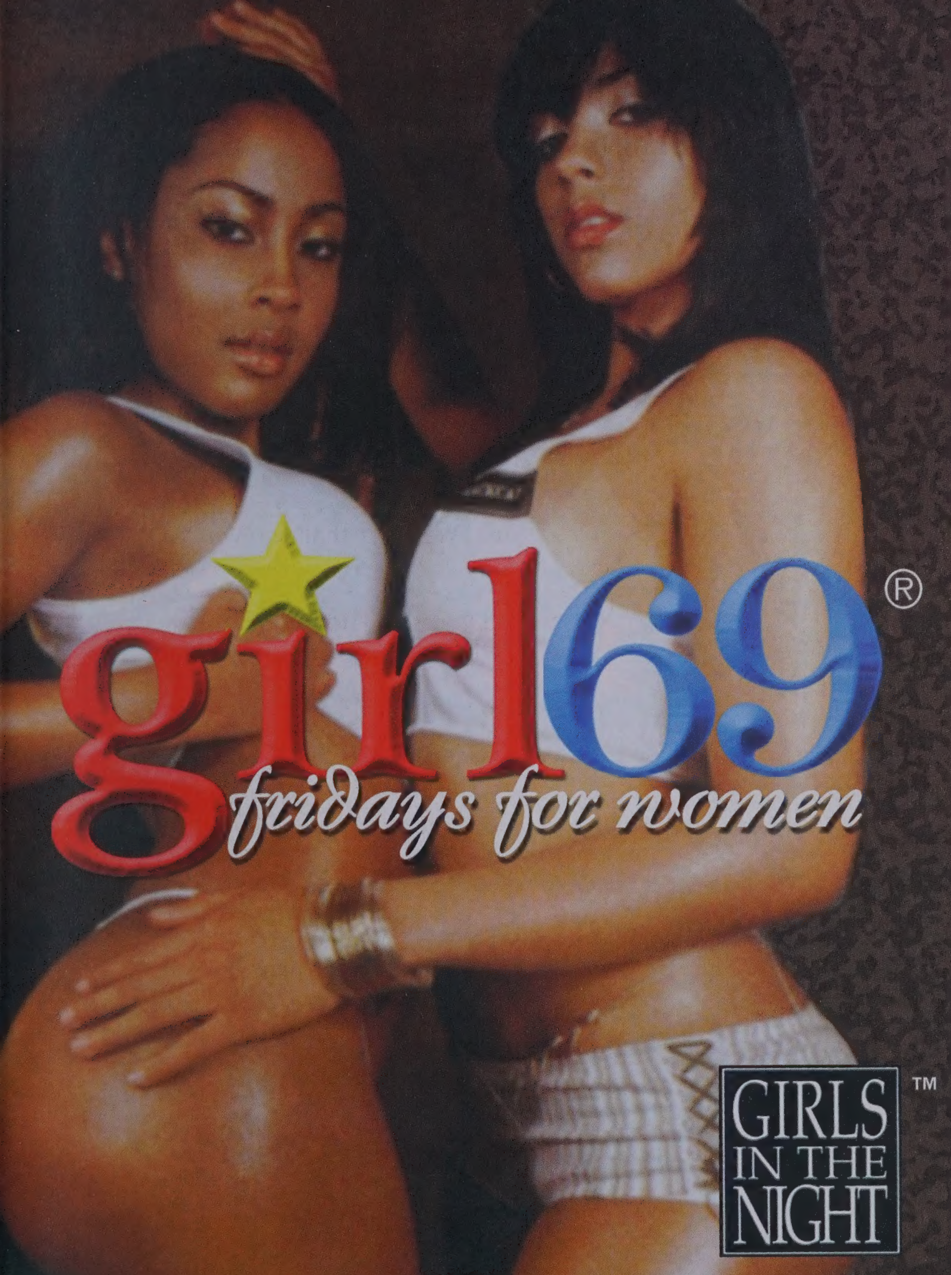

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By Stephen Macias, Entertainment Media Dir., GLAAD

GLAAD Statement Regarding 50 Cent

In an interview appearing in the April 2004 issue of Playboy magazine, 50 Cent made the following comment: "I ain't into faggots. I don't like gay people around me, because I'm not comfortable with what their thoughts are. I'm not prejudiced. I just don't go with gay people and kick it - we don't have that much in common."

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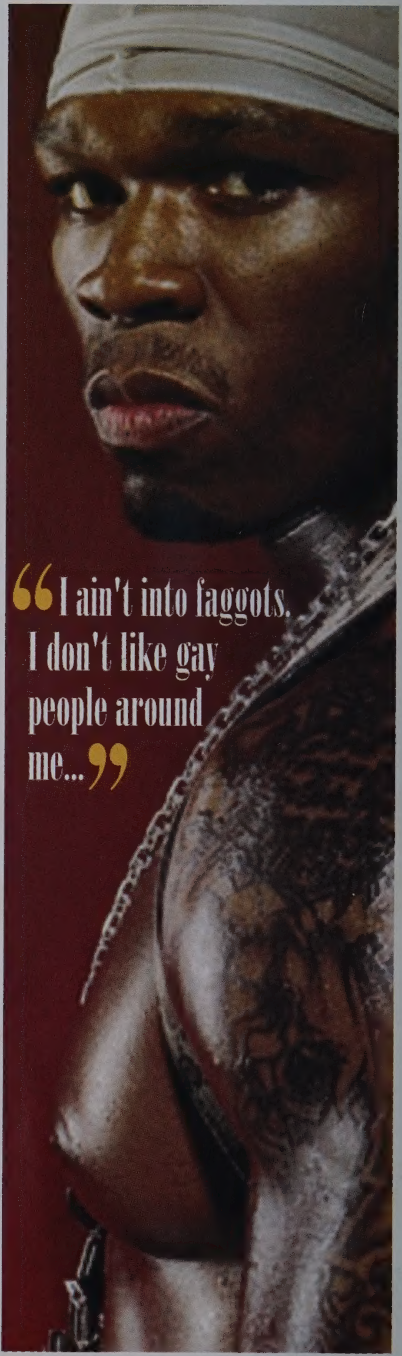
The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) expresses concern over 50 Cent's comments and believes that it can be dangerous to use words like "faggot" and "homo" when talking about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

"As a public figure, 50 Cent must realize that his words can have huge impact. We applaud his honesty in talking about the murder of his bisexual mother and appreciate his acknowledgement that he is not comfortable with gay people. We know that confronting homophobia can indeed be uncomfortable. But honesty is always the first step in overcoming the desire to judge those who are different than us and in overcoming prejudice," said People of Color Media Manager C. Riley Snorton, "A good way to start would be to attend GLAAD's annual media awards. I'd like to invite 50 Cent as my personal guest."

GLAAD encourages 50 Cent to get to know the LGBT community, and we are fully confident that in doing so he will find that he has more in common with us than he thinks.

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.



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By Brian Moylan

HIV/AIDS: Media's 'vanishing' epidemic

A new study and panel discussion about the media's treatment of HIV/AIDS exposes waning interest in covering the epidemic, which coincides with the public's changing perceptions of the disease.

READ ANY COMPELLING stories about HIV or AIDS lately? The answer is probably no, according to a new comprehensive study.

A report published March 1 by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, a California-based non-profit organization that does research and informs the public about major health issues, monitored media coverage of the HIV/AIDS epidemic between 1981 and 2002 and identified a steady decline in the number of news stories related to the topic that major media outlets published or produced.

"I think there is still an open question [about whether] the study presents evidence of 'media fatigue' or not," says Mollyanne Brodie, vice president and director of public opinion and media research for the Kaiser Family Foundation and a co-author of the study.

The study concludes that a central question raised about media coverage of HIV/AIDS in recent years is whether there has been media "fatigue" in covering the story. While some might agree with that conclusion, the study's authors noted that the decline in coverage also coincided with a change in the nature of the epidemic in the U.S. "from an absolute death sentence to a chronic disease that more people live with and manage day-to-day."

American University is scheduled to hold a panel discussion on this topic next week titled "AIDS: The Media's Vanishing Epidemic." The panelists will include medical journalists and directors at various AIDS organizations nationwide.

In the Kaiser Family Foundation study, Brodie and other authors also said the decline in coverage might reflect "the usual and customary news practice of focusing on other issues when an epidemic switches to a global focus, when there are no major new developments in terms of vaccines and treatment, and when the epidemic affects a small and increasingly marginalized population in the U.S."

The challenge for reporters covering HIV/AIDS, the study concluded, is "to find new ways to keep their audience engaged in a story that

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 11

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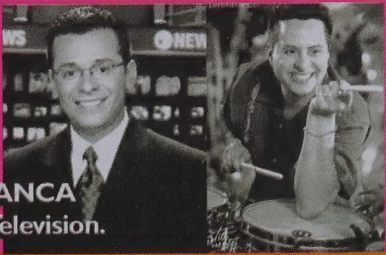

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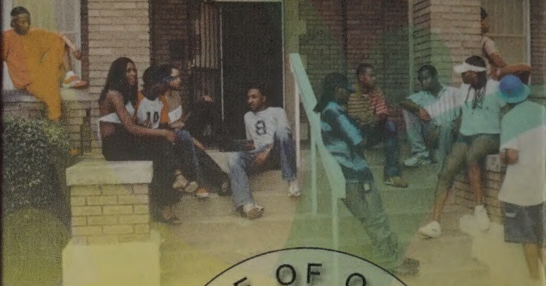

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may not meet editorial standards for 'news' as clearly as it once did."

The study looked at stories in national newspapers — New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and USA Today; regional newspapers — the San Francisco Chronicle, Miami Herald, and Los Angeles Times; and major broadcast news programs — ABC World News Tonight, CBS Evening News, and NBC Nightly News.

The peak of reporting about HIV and AIDS came in 1987, with nearly 5,000 news stories related to the epidemic appearing, and steadily declined to fewer than1,000 stories in 2002.

"When dealing with news impacting our community and people who are HIV-infected, the less news coverage, the less it's on people's minds," says Michael Cover, a spokesperson for Whitman-Walker Clinic, D.C.'s largest AIDS service organization, which also devotes itself to gay and lesbian health issues in general.

"We depend on keeping HIV on the radar screen," Cover says. "When you look at it from a health care perspective, it's easy for people to forget or to get tired of it and not protect themselves from HIV."

SOME OF THE most surprising data in the study relates to how media coverage correlates to the groups most affected by HIV. The authors of the study noted that while 100 percent of stories about HIV/AIDS, as portrayed by the news media in 1981, were about gay men, this figure declined to 5 percent in 1986, and remained the same or lower through 2002.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Center for Disease Control & Prevention in Atlanta has said that there has been a 17.7 percent increase in HIV diagnosis among gay men since 1999.

Similarly, only 3 percent of all the news stories over the 21 years covered in the study were about racial minorities in the United States, though the CDC reports that more than half of the new HIV cases in the United States in 2002 were among African Americans.

"I think even before you get to the specifics of which community is most affected at this moment in the timeline of AIDS, it's still difficult to get the attention of an editor to get space or airtime," says Jackie Judd, an Emmy-winning former correspondent for ABC News who currently is a senior fellow at the Kaiser Family Foundation. "AIDS has been around for a long time, and editors always want to see something new."

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Hi, Hi, Hi, it's **ADORA** with your local STD Report!

HIV: Be careful ladies, beautiful South Florida comes in at No.2 in the nation with this bad boy! **GONORRHEA:** Honey, the clap is back! **HEPATITIS C:** Its alive and well and this one owns beach front property on SOBE!

And Now for Our Featured STD OF THE WEEK!

SYPHILIS

Tap your shoes 3 times Dorothy because this ones a Twister!

LESIONS and **RASHES** and **SORES** Oh My!!

Syphilis is more popular than the wizard at a circuit party!

So wrap it up my dear Glindas and remember ...

there's no place like home.

PHOTO BY DWIGHT POWELL

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SOUTH FLORIDA SYPHILIS COALITION

SFSC

Don't Get It, Don't Spread It!

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

Crystal Meth

'fueling' STD rise in gay men

New data says gay men comprise 60 percent of syphilis cases in U.S.

A rapidly increasing percentage of new syphilis infections in gay men are linked to use of crystal methamphetamine, a popular party drug, according to reports released this week at the National STD Conference in Philadelphia.

STD prevention agencies face a "double-headed challenge" to overcome complacency in the public and increasing resistance to STD medications, said Dr. Ron Valdiserri, deputy director of the National Center for HIV, STD & TB Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, which hosted the conference.

"We have a real challenge here dealing with an American public that clearly is uncomfortable talking about STD infections, and I think many members of the American public and people at risk tend to minimize these infections," he said.

Among the many studies discussed at the four-day conference were reports with "new data on factors fueling increased rates" of STD transmission among gay men, Valdiserri said.

Some of the most striking data reported in the studies linked the use of crystal methamphetamine to new cases of syphilis among gay men, said Dr. Gordon Mansergh, a behavioral scientist at CDC.

"We've seen that crystal meth has increased ... as it moves to the East Coast," Mansergh said.

The CDC reported 1,263 gay men visited the San Francisco Department of Public Health clinic between November 2002 and March 2003, and 17.4 percent of those men reported crystal meth use in the four weeks leading up to the clinic visit.

After a decade of decline in syphilis cases, the CDC started noticing an upturn in syphilis infections three years ago, primarily in gay men, said Ron Valdiserri, deputy director of the National Center for HIV, STD & TB Prevention at the CDC.

Those crystal meth users were 2.2 times more likely to be diagnosed as HIV-positive and 4.9 times as likely to be diagnosed with syphilis, according to Mansergh.

The syphilis infection rate increased even more among men who used Viagra in combination with crystal, according to data from a 2001 survey in San Francisco.

"Men who used crystal meth and Viagra together were 6.1 times as likely to have syphilis," Mansergh said.

Data from the 2001 survey demonstrate how men on crystal meth put themselves at a higher risk than men who do not take

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 15

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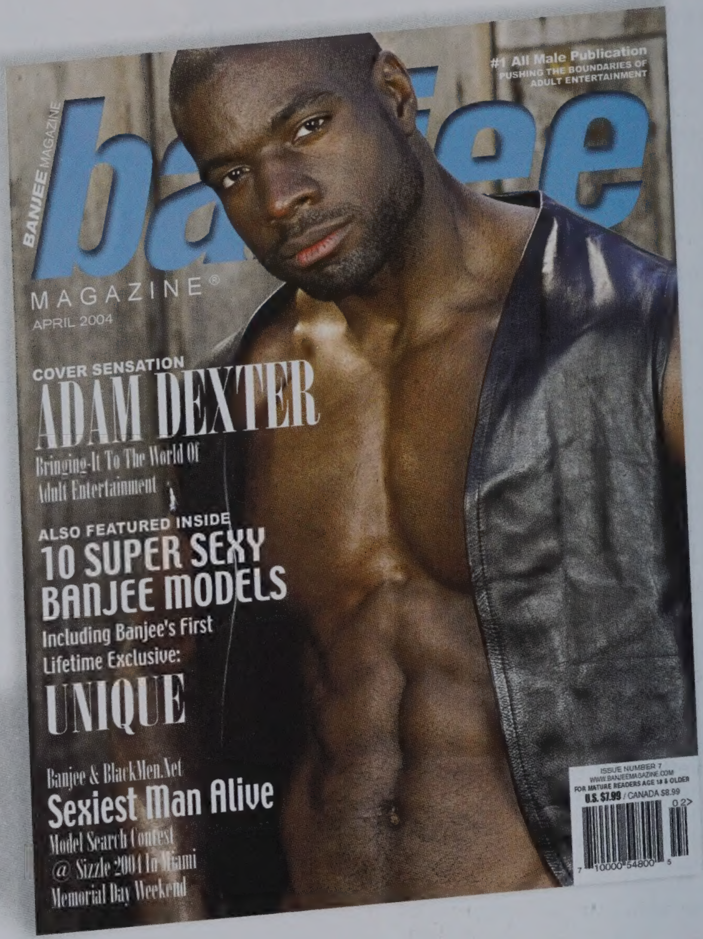
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METH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

the drug, according to Mansergh.

Men who took crystal meth were twice as likely to engage in unprotected receptive anal intercourse as men who did not take the drug, and men who took Viagra were 6.5 times as likely to have unprotected insertive anal intercourse than men who did not, he said.

Over the past four years, U.S. syphilis cases among gay men have risen 12-fold, said Dr. John Douglas, director of the division of STD prevention at CDC.

Another study conducted by the CDC between 1999 and 2003 indicates that syphilis is spreading at faster rates among gay men than lesbians or heterosexuals.

The syphilis increase may be a "precursor of worse things to come," Douglas said. "Syphilis tends to be a biologic amplifier of HIV transmission."

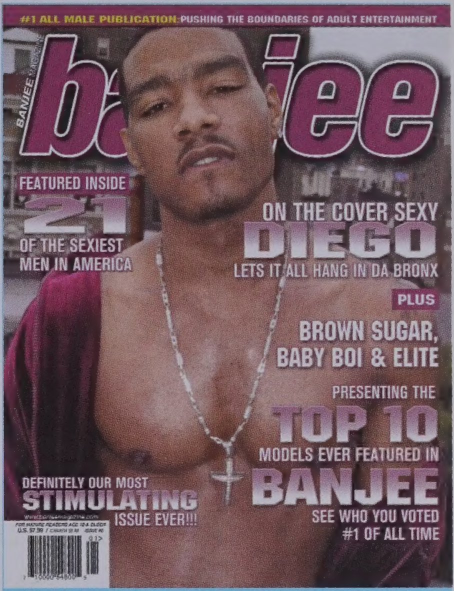
In 1999, the CDC estimated that only five percent of all reported syphilis cases in the U.S. were among men who have sex with men. By 2003, that percentage increased to 60 percent, Douglas said.

Before this study, the CDC's prevention efforts targeted heterosexuals, where the disease was an "overwhelming problem," he said.

But now, the CDC must adjust its prevention efforts for gay men while maintaining the success it has had among heterosexuals who have seen a decline in syphilis infections since 1999, Douglas said.

"We now realize that we need new, different strategies in homosexual men," Douglas said. "We don't yet reliably communicate information on sexual orientation in people who are diagnosed."

The syphilis study's percentages were not based on actual numbers of gay men who were diagnosed with syphilis, but a statistical model that compared the ratios of men and women diagnosed with syphilis and drew conclusions based on the disproportionate ratios.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It is time to Live Authentically!

WRITTEN BY IMANI EVANS, MA

We have moved into the age of Aquarius, and it is time to utilize the psycho-spiritual tools essential to creating, maintaining, and sharing a life driven by your Earthly purpose. I believe we all have a life purpose, which is our individual contribution to elevating the human experience, and enriching the Spirit Consciousness. Too often fear keeps us from connecting to our divine purpose. The lessons of our personal journey are gifts of transformation.

Are you living the life of your dreams? It is possible.

My Personal Journey: My story is one of faith, courage, and perseverance. I strive to model these attributes for people who are looking for a way to live abundantly, and build on a foundation of peace & happiness. I remember, very distinctly, at age 14 being overwhelmed with the feeling that I would be called to speak to the masses. At the time I did not know why, when, or even how this calling would manifest in my life.

By age 25 I had already endured some pretty traumatic circumstances: sexual violence, clinical depression, attempted suicide, and a baffling eating disorder. I remember thinking that The Creator & The Universal Spirit must hate me. I thought...I must have done some horrendous deed to deserve such treatment...but nothing could further from the truth. Now, I am certain that I endured -and survived—those ghastly experiences so that I might give hope to the hopeless...and tell a story of strength in faith.

So where am I today? After much self-exploration, and thought liberation, I am living without lack thinking. I am secure in who I am...and whose I am. Everything in my life begins and ends with my Inner-Spirit. My life is rooted in an unshakeable foundation of inner peace, self-love, and faith. I am consciously living the life of a spiritual being having an Earthly experience, which begins with attention and intention. I have the universe, other souls, and The Creator as the source of my supply---as do we all. It is this "knowingness" that enables me to face any challenge, and, then, share my lessons/gifts with others.

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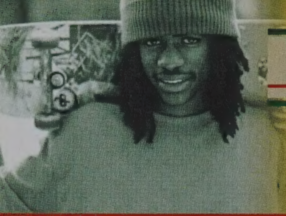
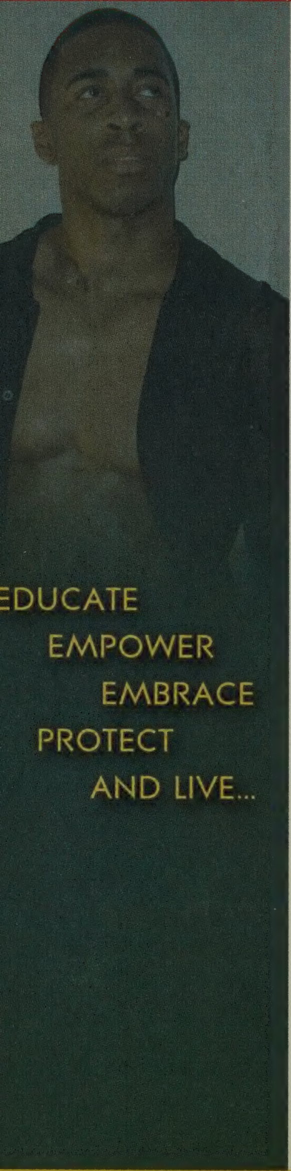


HOUSTON
YOUNG MEN SAVING MEN

YMSM is a community empowerment project of the Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation.



The Young Men Saving Men project has a diverse array of programmatic outreaches and interventions. One of the interventions is titled, Safe Talk, a three hour culturally appropriate behavioral skills-based workshop designed for gay and bisexual men to affirm the racial, ethnic, and sexual identities of the participants and to give them support as they make healthy choices about their sexual activities. In addition, Many Men, Many Voices, an effective six-session intervention intended for gay men of color to influence behavior change for HIV/STD prevention. Men share their own personal stories, their lack of acceptance by families and communities, their association with sex and power and relate these experiences to how they feel about themselves, their attitudes and beliefs, and their risky sexual behaviors. The YMSM program has other sessions as well: Self Esteem & Coming Out, Sexism, Homophobia, & Racism, and Eating Out: A Sex Buffet.

The Young Men Saving Men project has an Advisory Task Force formed to empower the AAYMSM community. It is a group of AAYMSM who come together the third Wednesday of every month to formulate a strategic plan of activities and prevention interventions for the AAYMSM community. The Advisory Task Force informs the YMSM staff of the needs of the AAYMSM population in Houston, hence, serving as the voice of the people. It sets the tone and the direction for numerous undertakings that the YMSM program oversees and guides. YMSM urges its Advisory Task Force members to express their leadership through peer counseling, mentoring, and participation in YMSM community activities. The Advisory Task Force also contributes in the development of program initiatives and supports the YMSM staff to ensure programs are conducted in a culturally competent and sensitive manner.

The Young Men Saving Men staff consists of a Program Director, Project Coordinator, Community Involvement Coordinator, Prevention Case Manager, Data Collection Specialist, and Community Outreach/Communications Specialist.

This year, the YMSM program is actively involved in Houston's Black Gay Pride. Black Gay Pride is from Thursday, April 29, 2004 - Monday, May 3, 2004. Our staff, members of the Advisory Task Force, and volunteers will perform street outreach the last hour and a half each night at the differ-

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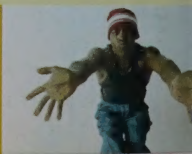

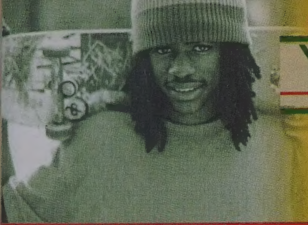

HOUSTON

Young Men Saving Men

YMSM is a community empowerment project of the Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation.

ent pride venues. Furthermore, YMSM will be facilitating three afternoon workshops Saturday at the host hotel, the Renaissance Hotel located at 6 Greenway Plaza East, Houston, TX 77046: 1) Men on Tha Down Low & The Alarming HIV Rates of Black Women, 12:00 p.m. 2) Tops & Bottoms, 12:30 p.m. 3) Legal Love & Liability for Gay Men of Color, 1:00 p.m.

The Young Men Saving Men program is also conducting a behavioral study on AAYMSM. This study is of vast significance for the program because the only way to determine what actions need to be implemented in the AAYMSM community is to know the risky behaviors being practiced. An epidemiological profile, a socio-demographical overview of the AAYMSM community which measures the impact of HIV/AIDS in the Houston metropolitan area, a hierarchy of risks for becoming infected with HIV, and the geographic distribution of HIV/AIDS cases in the Houston metropolitan area will be tabulated from the results of the behavioral study. A needs assessment and a gap analysis will also be conducted to determine the needs the AAYMSM community and the existing gaps in services targeting this high-risk population.

The Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation received a five year grant to develop and facilitate a strategic alliance that will improve delivery of HIV prevention and care services to AAYMSM and their partners. The YMSM program created C.O.B.R.A. (Coalition Of Blacks Responding to AIDS) to improve delivery of HIV prevention and care services to AAYMSM. The Coalition encompasses staff from local health departments, planning groups, and community based organizations (CBOs) that work together to increase involvement of AAYMSM. In short, COBRA is an alliance of community stakeholders that assist one another in developing linkages and delivering HIV prevention services to AAYMSM and their partners in Houston.

In conclusion, the ground rules for YMSM program are mutual respect, self love, and confidentiality. YMSM promotes activities that incorporate sex positive, gay positive, and black & brown positive messages. Additionally, YMSM encourages social activism and self-esteem motivation, recognizes the major role that peer influence plays in the lives of AAYMSM, and creates a setting where AAYMSM can express their identities with each other, find support, and band together to take action on issues of importance to their unique community. The YMSM program designs and implements intervention activities to foster a sense of ownership of the program and a sense of personal commitment to HIV prevention by facilitating a process for AAYMSM to actively communicate ideas towards safer sex in a fun and uplifting manner.

YMSM provides you and your partner with:

- An Opportunity to Voice Your Concerns
- Free HIV/STI Counseling and Testing
- Safer Sex Education
- Peer Counseling
- Risk Reduction Education
- Referral Services
- Depression Counseling
- Self Esteem Development
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness
- Decision Making/Partner Negotiation
- Prevention Case Management
- Leadership Training
- Social and Recreational Activities
- Volunteer Opportunities
- A Safe Social Environmen

Brother To Brother

A Miasma Films Production

In Association with C-Hundred Film Corp. and Intrinsic Value Films

Winner-2004 Sundance Film Festival-Special Jury Prize

Brother To Brother is a feature length narrative film which follows the emotional and psychological journey of a young Black gay artist as he discovers the hidden legacies of the gay and lesbian subcultures within the Harlem Renaissance.

After being found in an intimate, sexual encounter with another young man, Perry is thrown out of his house by his family and forced to survive on his own. As he struggles to hold on by working in a homeless shelter and trying to maintain a college scholarship, he is haunted by his homosexuality and becomes increasingly withdrawn due to his family's rejection of him and their condemnation of his desires. As his friend Marcus is performing his new poetry for him, an elderly man, Bruce, appears seemingly out of nowhere and begins reciting verse to them. He disappears just as quickly and elusively as he arrived, before they get a chance to talk to him. In his library research for a class project, Perry finds a book about the Harlem Renaissance and recognizes a poem ("Smoke, Lilies and Jade" by Bruce Nugent) as the same one that the elderly man was reciting. They encounter each

10 Magical Days of the
6TH ANNUAL
MIAMI
GAY &
LESBIAN
FILM
FESTIVAL
April 23 - May 2, 2004

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PREMIERE
Saturday, April 24th @ 9:30pm
at the Regal Cinema
South Beach, Florida

Rodney Evans is the recipient of The Independent Feature Project's Gordon Parks Award for Screenwriting for his screenplay, Brother To Brother. He also recently received funding from The Jerome Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation and ITVS towards the writing and production of this new project. **Brother To Brother premiered at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival where it won the Special Jury Prize for passion in filmmaking.** The film had its European premiere at The Berlin International Film Festival in February, 2004. His autobiographical film, Close To Home, has been shown at over 30 film festivals throughout the world. His last feature-length project, The Unveiling, opened theatrically in LA and New York in 1998.

CRITICS CORNER

"Breathtaking....a fascinating and absorbing tale...heralds the emergence of an exciting new voice in black filmmaking"
-Kirk Honeycutt, The Hollywood Reporter

"The story Evans tells of the spiritual link between a contemporary black gay New York artist and the trailblazers of the 1930's Harlem Renaissance is an excitingly ambitious one, conveyed with guileless passion of purpose"
-Owen Gleiberman, Entertainment Weekly

"Brother To Brother brings depth and intelligence to black politics and sexuality"
David Rooney, Variety

"A brave and unique voice in American cinema....Rich in heart and intelligence, Rodney Evans's first fiction feature pays homage to art, intellectual ancestry and the strength to persevere in the face of social injustice"
Shari Frilot, Sundance Film Festival

other again at the homeless shelter where Perry works. He confronts Bruce about who he is and begins to ask him about the Harlem Renaissance. They go on a literal and metaphorical journey to the house that was known as "Niggeratti Manor" which was the creative center for the younger, rebellious generation of the Harlem Renaissance as they created their revolutionary literary journal, "Fire!". Although the house is now dilapidated, we are transported through the landscape of Bruce's memories of the glory days of the Harlem Renaissance. Perry learns about the lives and personalities of Wallace Thurman, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and Aaron Douglas and sees how they became a surrogate family for Bruce. Perry begins to recognize this era as his history. He sees the pride that Bruce exuded in those times in terms of being Black, gay and unashamed. His pride and self-esteem begin to have an empowering effect on Perry as he gains a stronger sense of his identity. As the story progresses, we witness the transformative power that they have on each other's lives through their shared passion for art and storytelling.

10 Magical Days of the 6TH ANNUAL
MIAMI GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL
April 23 - May 2, 2004

Miami, Florida - March 16, 2004 - The prestigious Sixth Annual Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, presented by HBO, has unveiled the line-up of the best gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered films that will be featured during the 10 day event from April 23rd to May 2nd. The screenings will take place at the historic Gusman Center for the Performing Arts (in downtown Miami), the Shores Performing Arts Center, the Regal Cinema South Beach, The Miami Beach Cinematheque and Cinema Paradiso (located in Fort Lauderdale).

The Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, a critically acclaimed event, is held in the world-renowned historic South Beach neighborhood and features films by, about and of interest to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities.

Additional screenings, educational and social events occur throughout the year.

General Contact Information

Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
1521 Alton Road, #147
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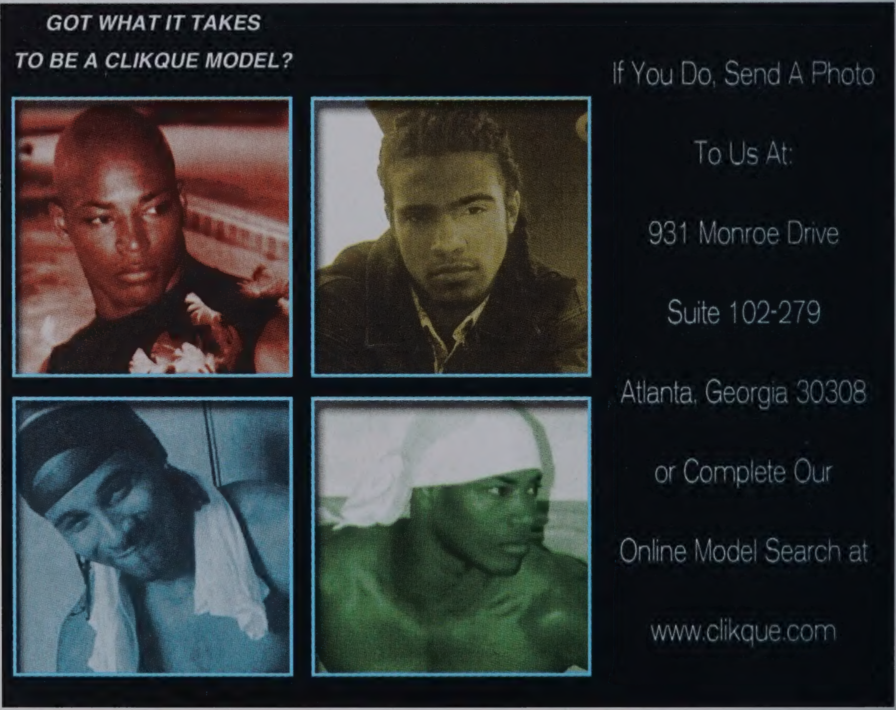

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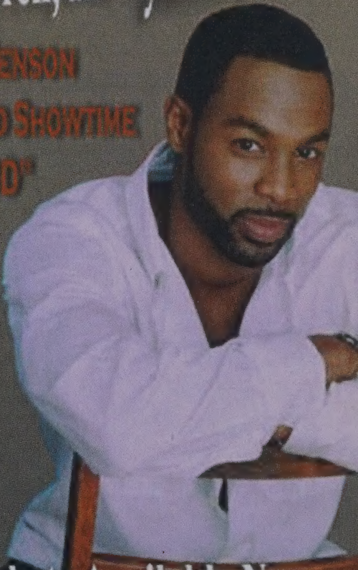

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Just How Cool Are DL Brothers?

Down Low Or Double Life

This is not a very nice topic to discuss but I feel I need to share this information with my sisters. Kisha & I went to a seminar where a man named J.L. King was speaking on the subject of "DL Brothers". The "DL" stands for Down Low or Double Lives. Now, what makes this so interesting is that Mr. King is a DL brother. South Carolina is #8 in the nation for HIV/AIDS new cases. African American women are 80% of all new cases and they are contracting the virus from men who are having sex with other men but they are doing this on the "Down Low". These men say they are not gay....they are heterosexual but just sleep with men once in a while. These are men who work in the church as officers, men who are leaders in the community, men that say they hate those "faggots".

DOWN LOW
What you don't know can kill you...
...Get the facts. Get tested!
www.livingdownlow.com

Mr. King shared his life story and said he knows a lot of "DL" brothers in the NBA/NFL and even in the entertainment world and to prove his point: On Thursday, the director of the Tri-County Collaboration for the prevention of HIV/AIDS, Valerie King (no relation) took J.L. to a Charleston Club and introduced him to 5 men she knew. These men were respected men at work and church. Valerie excused herself for about 15-20 minutes. In that time J.L. had gotten 3 of the 5 men's phone numbers to hook up with later. By the end of the evening he also got 10 female numbers. He said the reason he is talking about this is his fear that his grown daughter may run into a "DL" brother and never know.

These men are masters in the art of lying and living that double life. His wife thought it was wonderful that he worked so hard in the church with different men on different projects right up to the time he had to tell her he was HIV positive.

This, needless to say, destroyed his family and his marriage.

He has 3 grown children who now have to live with the knowledge that their father gave their mother HIV and possibly AIDS. I know of one man in my own church who is a "DL" brother and has AIDS. (Because what you do on the "DL" will come out in the light) J.L. mentions that this is a widespread epidemic here in Charleston.

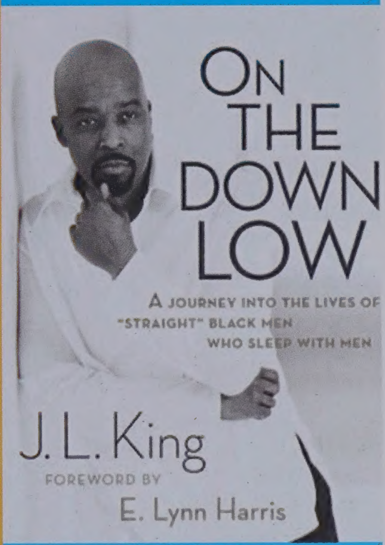
I went on the web site and looked up several references on HIV/AIDS in the South. The numbers are showing whites are going down but African Americans are going up &up...mostly heterosexual African American women. I have been asking myself all week...what is this world coming to? When is God going to say....this is enough. This is truly the work of the enemy! Ladies, this is also praying time. I have shared this with my youngest daughter too! I'm going to pass this message to as many females I know and I pray you do the same.

Mr. King is a national HIV prevention educator, activist, author, and producer who specializes in the analysis of the behavior and lifestyles of African American men who have sex with men, but do not consider themselves gay, bisexual or homosexual—men on the "Down Low." He has interviewed over 2,500 men who are living on the DL.

Once we understand that HIV/AIDS is not something that is just happening in Africa, that it is preventable, and that we as black women understand the importance of knowledge on the subject then maybe we can make a difference.

The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.
Peter F. Drucker

For More Information Visit:
http://www.livingdownlow.com/


ON THE DOWN LOW
A JOURNEY INTO THE LIVES OF "STRAIGHT" BLACK MEN WHO SLEEP WITH MEN
J.L. King
FOREWORD BY
E. Lynn Harris

TOP QUESTIONS ASKED ABOUT THE DOWN LOW BEHAVIOR:

Note: The answers to these questions and much more will be in the book, please make sure you get your copy on **MAY 10, 2004.**

1 How can I tell if my man is on the DL?
2 Why won't he just choose a man and leave me alone?
3 What is it about sex with a man that is better than with a women?
4 Is this a learned behavior or are men born with this desire?
5 Why don't down low men practice safer sex?
6 Will he ever stop having sex with men?
7 How many men are on the down low?
8 When did this start?
9 Why won't he be honest?
10 Do white men live on the Down low?
11 What about women on the down low?
12 Why are you doing this work?
13 What did your children say when they found out about you?
14 How did you get started?
15 What kind of relationship do you have with your ex wife?
16 Do you date women?
17 What do you tell women before you have sex with them?
18 How do I get my man to wear condoms?

Four Of Atlanta's Hottest Promoters

TAKING YOU TO THE XTREME

Xtreme Entertainment was established in October 2002 by a group of four friends seeking to enhance the quality of entertainment and night life in Metro-Atlanta. The initial project was to market a night club promotion to a specific target audience. After a successful launch of this promotion, Xtreme Entertainment began to gain recognition from both customers and competitors and quickly developed a reputation for providing the best in entertainment and night life.

Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Xtreme Entertainment has now established itself as one of the fastest growing entertainment companies in the southeast. As a nationally recognized company, Xtreme Entertainment has continuously explored new business opportunities and is now marketing and promoting several events simultaneously.

Xtreme Entertainment has established a reputation for providing the very best in quality entertainment and special events. From this reputation, the company has branded itself by establishing the philosophy and slogan "Quality Entertainment for Quality People".

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To be the number one choice of clients seeking to increase awareness of their establishment. Through consistency, professionalism, and quality, Xtreme Entertainment will ensure a hassle free event to ease the client's event planning burden. Xtreme Entertainment's goal is to be consistently in tune with market needs, and to always stay creative, progressive, and fresh in its ideas and concepts.

XTREMEPROFILE

Xtreme is comprised of four principals, a small staff and a few contracted vendors, that plan, promote and manage events. Xtreme is the answer to the demands of clients both new and old in need of assistance increasing exposure to their business. Each of the four principals brings years of knowledge and expertise to the field of marketing, promotions and events planning. Their backgrounds are well versed in all facets of entertainment in addition to their practical business experience.

We energize our consumers by understanding their core values and mind set, developing alluring and stimulating promotional mediums, and executing compelling targeting marketing campaigns. We specialize in high impact marketing and promotions that provide our client with everything they need to succeed.

-Xtreme Management
Leaders In Special Events,
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Promoters Of The Lions Den
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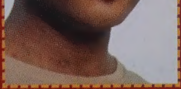
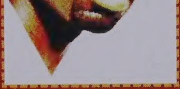
BROTHAS BEHIND THE MAJIC IN THE PEACH CITY

DERECK WALLACE is a native of Northern California. Dereck always been known to have a keen sense of what it takes to create and breathe life into a sensational event.



GREGORY ALLEN is a native of Pompano Beach, Fl. He holds a BS Degree in Organizational Management from St. Paul's College, and a MS Degree in Human Resource Management from Troy State U.



GREG DOUGLAS is a native of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Greg has more than 10 years experience reaching African American urban markets

JOHN MOORE is a native of Nashville, Tennessee. He attended Tennessee State University where he majored in Business Administration.

ON THE COVER
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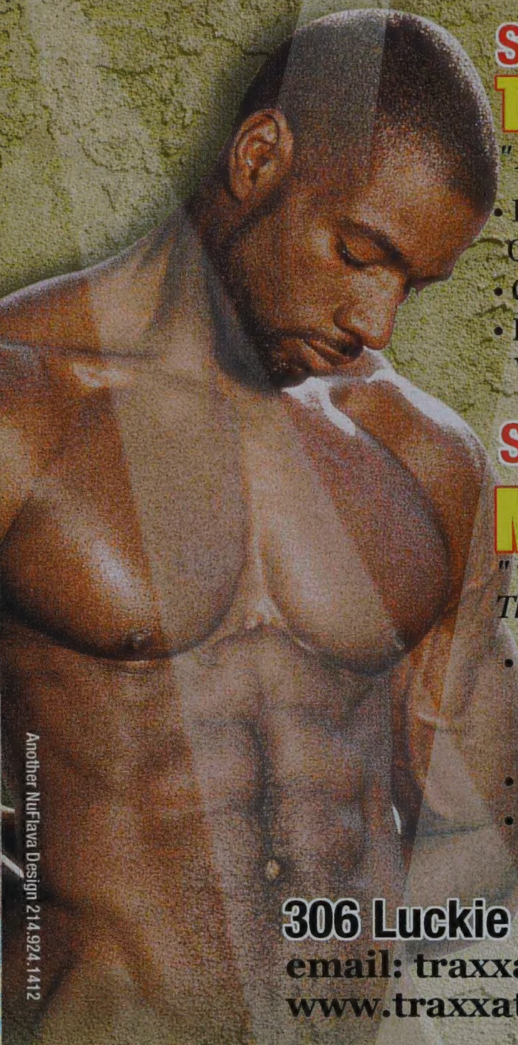

SAT. APRIL 3, 2004

The Paparazzi Part

"A party where stars are born!"

- For all Ballers, Divas, Kings, Queens & local celebrities
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- Lounge in the ALL NEW luxurious VIP area

SAT. APRIL 10, 2004

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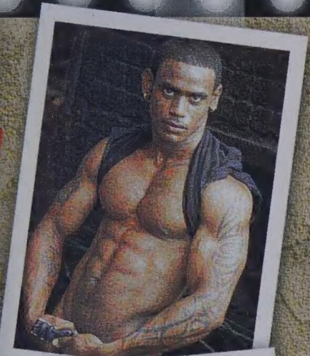

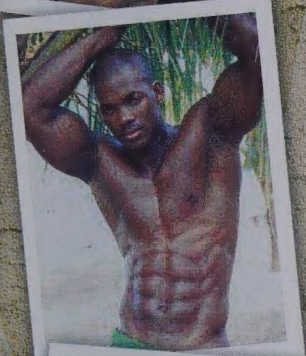

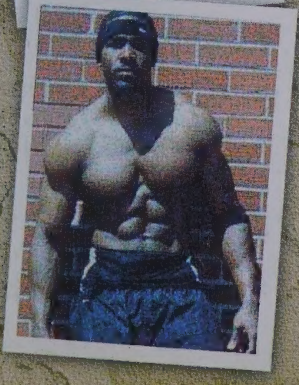

SAT. APRIL 17, 2004

The TRAXX Reunion Party

"Watch history repeat itself"

Do you remember the Ritz, Goodies, Friends, Alexander's & the Legendary Traxx, well this is a party you will not forget.

SAT. APRIL 24, 2004

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"A function for the chic, the grown and the sexy"

- Complimentary cosmopolitans courtesy of Ph.D. Entertainment until midnight

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Hip-Hop • House • Reggae • R&B

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The nation's premier lip sync entertainment showcase

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Hot Dancers • Live Entertainment • Full Bar • Atl's Finest DJ

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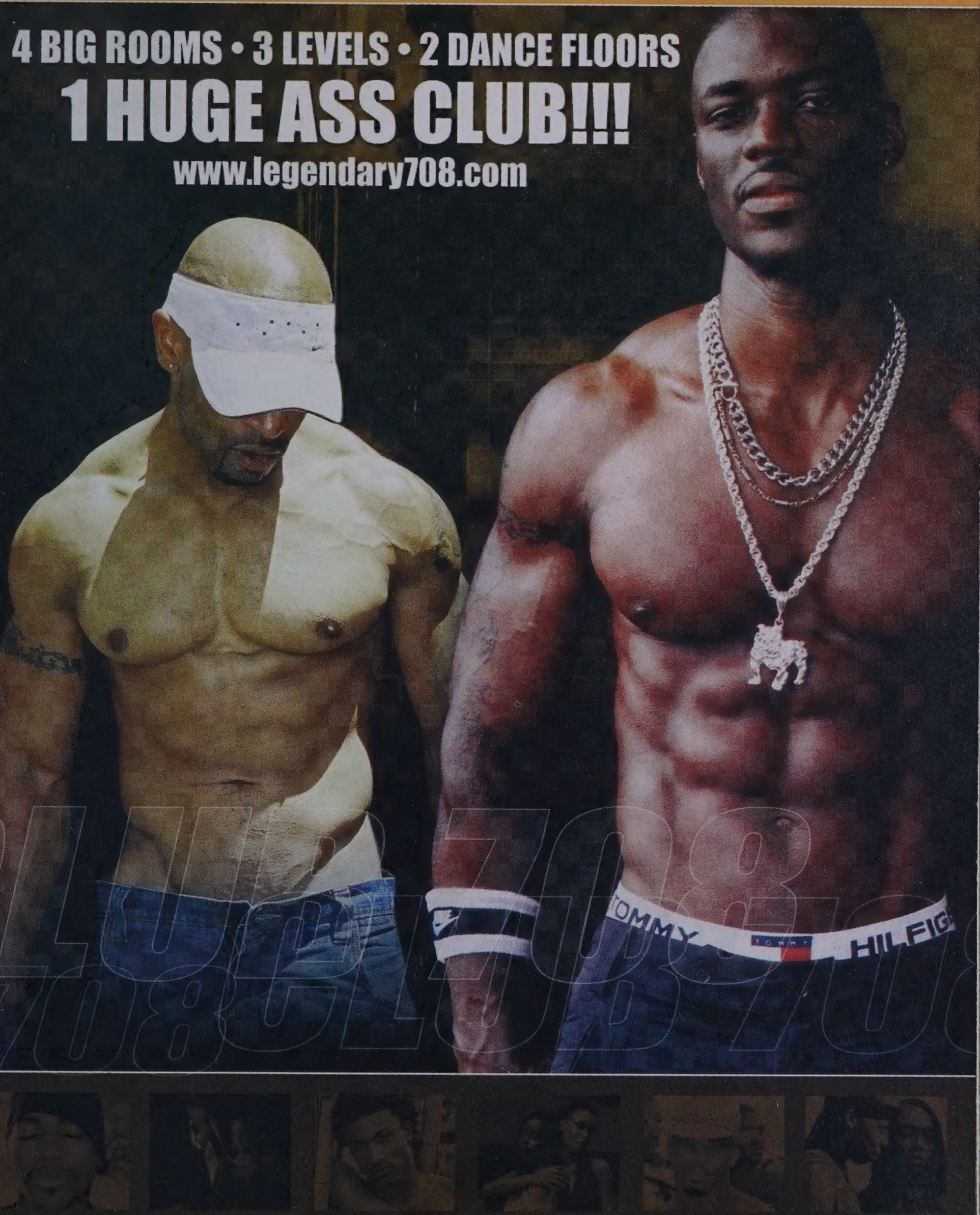
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CLUB708
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Exploding Passions

A retrospective on the evolution of the Black Pride Movement

By: Darryl!

BLACK PRIDE 2004

"...Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done, as it is in heaven. Give us this day...." There is a journey that every person must take for her/himself. It is a journey of self -discovery and enlightenment. This journey will travel through what seems like the bowels of hell, the straights of purgatory, and the fjords of possibility until finally reaching a safe haven. No two journeys are exactly alike but they are in fact so similar that no matter where one starts the journey inevitably some of the same kinds of experiences are notated in the footnotes and references of the facts of the journey. This journey will cause one to experience passion at new levels. Filled with moments of exquisite ecstasy, unbridled lusts, personal anguish, self-doubt, ultimate healing, and personal fulfillment the experience is bound to leave its indelible mark on life forever.

There are religious overtones and society's judging eye provides undertones that will disrupt the journey. But there are opportunities for focus and strength building- called by many names- each one sounding as sweet and smelling as fresh- but carrying one true theme- PRIDE. This is a story about African-American Pride- the exploding passions and the evolution of the spring and summer cotillions that seek to offer hope and guidance to all who would enter in.

There you are standing in the lobby of the Majestic Hotel and Conference Center. The organizers promised, "No shortage of EVERYTHING you will need and want to have" this weekend. And for the first time you find yourself standing in a sea of Black beauty. There is a constant buzz of excitement as people stand around hugging, smiling, and getting acquainted (or reacquainted as the case may be). You are awestruck. Standing there you feel like you have never felt before there are no words to describe... your thoughts race, your eyes feast, your heart pounds, you feel like if you don't move you will explode. All at once you want someone to speak but you fear anyone speaking - you have no idea what to say.

As you begin to walk through the throng of faces and bodies you become incredibly self aware- concerned about your appearance and you begin to think (do I look alright, is my hair right, will anyone like me, what if I..., or if someone touches..., or if I want to...) thoughts that move so quickly that you can get neither answer or question completed before the next one swirls through. You have never seen so many phine people in your life, all at one time, in one place, possibly for the same reasons.

As you stand there a stranger speeds by and without looking in your face or speaking directly hands you a Xeroxed pieces of colored paper and says "come on up we're partying 24 hours a day all weekend long- we got everything you need." Before you could respond the stranger's gone and you are left with dozens of questions and this colored piece of paper. You look down at the paper and your heart almost stops, skips a few beats and you almost lose your carefully crafted pose. In your hand you find your first direct introduction to the event you are attending- it's a very exhilarating and picturesque invitation to "One incredible experience" a "sex party in RM 2307. Call first you will be met at the elevator and escorted... clothes will be bagged at the door... don't bring valuables... no sightseers... free dental dams, condoms and lube all colors, flavors, and sizes. No toys allowed. Plenty of action to get your freak on- three rooms of pleasure."

You feel flush, you quickly fold the paper and look around to see who's been watching you- fearing someone will know your thoughts and see what you've been reading. You look around for the stranger to ask a question but you see only an ever-increasing parade of people. Your curiosity is rising. Just then one of the organizers comes by. People yell out "Waaz up?," "I got my pass...," " when's the first event?," and so on. You are pulled into the group and for the first time feel safe. A gorgeous woman puts her arms around you "hey boo how you doin'" the words drip like sweet sliced peaches off her tongue- you are mesmerized. You stutter "I'm ai'ight, thank you." She smiles an understanding smile "this is your first time here... where you from sweetie?" You feel encouraged albeit a bit embarrassed that you have been so easily clocked and exposed, "Yes... from Lossetenstate, Iowa." "Shit, you got blacks in Iowa...well anyway your are welcome here. If you need anything I'm Allysha and over there is EJ, Candy and Kordavious; we're part of the organization anything you need go to that table and we can help you, 'k?"

Before you could say 'thank you' you hear a slamming beat and a song you've never heard before, the crowd converges and then parts revealing "Lady Destiny" singing about her milkshake! She was shaking and dancing and everyone seemed to be excited. People are clapping hands, and swaying with each other, and hollering out "Walk bitch...walk," "All riiight miss thang work it." "That's right gyrl my milkshake brings 'em out too- and I do mean OUT!" She brushed past you smelling like White Diamonds dressed Prada down. She had on what seemed like 9inch heals and never missed a beat. You watch as the entourage carrying bags and garments, (and a lot of stuff) got on the elevator. The crowd returned to its continual buzz of excitement.

Quickly you turn to the table, reg-

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 36

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

ister, and get your PRIDE pass and information guide. You look at the schedule and see the first pool event starts in 20 minutes so you head back to your room to get ready. Little do you know what you are in for this weekend!

This scenario may be familiar or similar to stories you've heard. And this is why Black Pride events are so needed. Many of our people have not been exposed to positive images of themselves or of same gender loving/attracted people. Unfortunately we have allowed the images of us to be profuse with images of sex and violence. The "religious conservatives" have damned us to hell and conspired with political conservatives and thin skinned liberals to relegate us to a group net deserving of equal rights because we somehow choose to be deviant from society's demand to join in relationships that neither suit us or them.

Where does one go to fell whole and supported? Beyond the need to just release tension and feel free. Beyond the staring judgmental gaze of "loving" family and friends; beyond the reach of "concerned" clergy and disapproving leaders; and beyond self-hatred and loathing? Fortunately in our community there are conclaves of opportunities to regenerate, rejuvenate, and re-invent us. For the unsuspecting attendee these events do not just pop up like windows on a computer screen. It has taken suffering through brutality, hatred, anger, legal constraints, and unity building efforts to bring to you the series of Circuit parties and Pride events we now enjoy through-out this country. From the west coast to the east coast from the north to the south there are nearly 36 known Black Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Prides and circuit parties. There are a host of circuit parties in various places that, while not boasting to be a Pride event, serve much the same purpose as a Pride. In fact the truth be told the Black Gay pride movement was spawned from our leaders and promoters who first took the plunge and created circuit parties.

As a national advocate and activist for our community (having served as the former Secretary of the International Federation of Black Prides, former Executive Director of In The Life Atlanta, and helped the organizers of the original Memphis Black Pride) I have had the opportunity to meet some of the the founders and learn of our great legacy in bringing equality and justice to our people. This legacy is rich and powerful. It is ours and we must claim it in its entirety, the good, bad, ugly, the bold and the beautiful. This is a retrospective and I will continue to work to gather complete histories and herstories of the developments in our movement from each local event so that we can take great pride in ourselves and in what we have been able to accomplish in the past 25-30 years. What you will find in this retrospective is a respect for the passion of the organizers and leaders who took a chance and stood up to make Pride something we could not only imagine but grasp within our lifetime. This passion drives most of the leaders and organizers today. It is this passion that we are able to put aside petty differences and past issues to collectively build a national and international movement of Black Prides that build up where others have tried to tear down.

Now it seems that the first known event was the Los Angeles "At The beach" party. While it was not called an official Pride event it served to bring together our brothers, sisters, and bristahs from all over the country to celebrate who we are in the openness of Malibu Beach, California. For years the "children" flocked, during Independence Day weekend (July 4th), to the beach party to see get hooked up, to share stories, to offer strength and encouragement to each other. At this time this was the key place for GLBT people of color to gather, forget for a moment the struggles and pressures of home, and live OUT free lives. This event began informally and was soon organized into one of the most socially and economically powerful events in our history. Since then it has become an official Black Pride.

As a result of the impact of HIV/AIDS on our community and the congregation of Black Gay and Lesbian people in our nations capitol these forces conspired to force leadership of the Black GLBT community and as such DC Black pride was spawned. Officially as the first "Black Pride" event during Memorial Day it offered workshops and seminars. The major venues in the city offered the nightlife and parties. Soon the concept of building community through activism and collaboration spread and DC continued to set the stage for what Black prides are about. Soon it became the first event of the year and marked the beginning of Black Gay Pride season in the USA.

Many people ask the question why do we need a Black Pride when we could just attend the "other" Pride celebrations throughout the nation? Well for an answer to this question we look first to NYC and the team of people there who began promoting Black events during the NYC Pride event. Why was this necessary? Because the non-people of color organizers were not sensitive to the needs and specific concerns that impact Black people. Why do we spend most of our "out" lives in the darkness? Why didn't we attend parades and marches, why didn't we feel comfortable holding our lovers' hands walking down the street? Because the ugly head of racism was and is equally as mean and devastating as the ugly head of heterosexism.

Blacks faced not only discrimination because of sexuality but simply because of the color of their skin. Women were still unequal; despite the changes in legislation, and Jim Crow was a mean and nasty bastard that threatened the safety of our lives on a daily basis. The federal government, religious institutions, and other places where we should have been able to seek refuge turned a blind eye to the disparity of living conditions, economic disadvantages, social inequalities and religious persecutions faced by Blacks daily. Add then Black gayness to the mix and you have a concoction for war. The Black church, which served as the bastion for the civil rights movement, turned a deaf ear to the needs of the minority in its own

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 39

PEOPLE OF COLOR IN CRISIS
presents

PRIDEINTHECITY2004

LOVE IS THE MESSAGE

SAVE THESE DATES! IF YOU THOUGHT LAST YEAR WAS HOT CATCH US THIS YEAR.

AUG5th THRU AUG8th

THURSDAY
AUGUST 5: WELCOME CEREMONY W/SUPRISE GUEST PERFORMANCE
OFFICIAL KICKOFF PARTY AT LANGSTON

FRIDAY
AUGUST 6: OFFICIAL PRIDE PARTY featuring NYC's HOTTEST DJ's

SATURDAY
AUGUST 7: SPECIAL COMPREHENSIVE WORKSHOPS
FAMILY DAY PICNIC (FT. GREENE PARK)

FEATURING: The First Ever Outdoor Mini-Ball w/CASH!!!
W/NYC'S HOTTEST DJ'S & SPECTACULAR CELEBRITY PERFORMANCES

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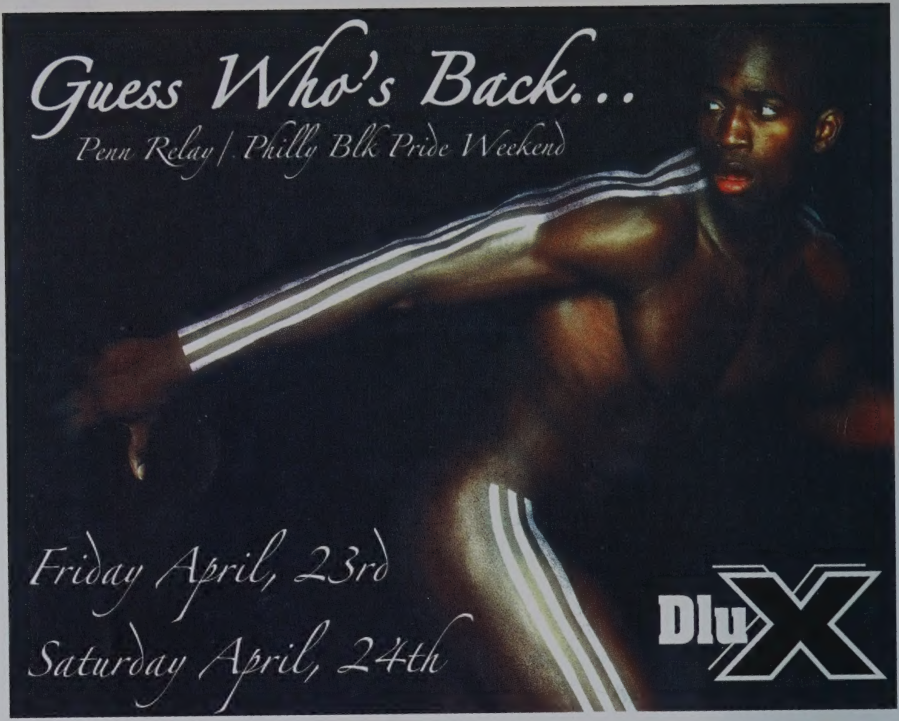
AUGUST 8: BEACH PARTY (RIIS BEACH)
W/ A SIZZLING - SENSATIONAL PERFORMANCE BY A GUEST RECORDING ARTIST

POCC:PEOPLE OF COLOR IN CRISIS 468 BERGEN ST. BROOKLYN NY 11217
718.230.0770
www.prideinthecity.com www.pocc.org


Guess Who's Back...
Penn Relay / Philly Blk Pride Weekend
Friday April, 23rd
Saturday April, 24th
DluX

Featuring DJ Storm....You Scared?

WALL TO WALL GOOD LOOKING BROTHAS
THE BIGGEST SPACES & LONGEST RUNNING PARTIES
FREE CHAMPAGNE ALL NIGHT!

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"If it ain't ruff, it ain't right!"

Friday April, 23rd

L&J Entertainment Center
3419-23 Kensington Ave., Philly
11pm-6am • 21 & Older
(State ID a must-No exceptions)
Pre-Pay Tix $15
B4 mid $15 • After $20
FIRST 200 GUESTS ENTER FOR FREE

Saturday April, 24th

The National Armory
23rd St. (between Market & Chestnut), Philly
11pm-6am • 21 & Older
(State ID a must-No exceptions)
Pre-Pay Tix $20
B4 mid $20 • After $25
FIRST 200 GUESTS ENTER FOR FREE

Weekend Pass for Both Events $30 while they lasts! • For more info (610) 284-1927 • www.phillysdlux.com

NEED WE SAY MORE...?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

family.

So Black gay people were forced into the closet and into the darkness of the cover of night to experience any kind of personal liberation and freedom. So the nations largest Gay pride, the foundation of the Gay pride movement forgot its darker skinned brothers and sisters. Just because people were gay did not mean they did not carry with them the same social and cultural bigoted ideals. Black women were still objects of desire and black men were commodities to be used for labor and sex as needed.

Our ideas, needs, wants were not included in the discussions. What we had to offer the movement was not considered relevant or important. Realistically the gay movement decided it could not fight a gay rights movement within a civil rights movement at that time. This is not a judgment and it should come as no surprise to either our Caucasian or Black brothers or sisters. In any movement you have to decide what you can do and how effective you can be and you have to make choices. Since our leaders in the civil rights movement failed to support us or include us in any substantive and respectable manner (consider the marginalization of Bayard Rustin and his very significant role in civil and human rights movements in this country and around the world) how could we expect our white counterparts to take on that battle too? Consider too our most prominent and prolific literary, public, and civic giants who were forced often into an obscure silence about their sexuality if they were to enjoy any kind of personal success in their chosen fields.

So instead progressive minded individuals and promoters created events for us, by us, and about us. To this we owe a large debt of gratitude to our NYC family for forging a way and leading by example. They taught us how to make pride profitable and powerful.
But pride was about more that money and power. It was about exposure and visibility. It was a chance to celebrate our entire "being ness" without fear, shame, or regret. The organizers and promoters had a passion to build a platform for us experience life to the fullest.

While we still have a long way to go we are so much better for the efforts of our leaders and ancestors. This is the answer to why there must be Black Prides. Because we as a people have a long way to go in being accepted within our own community as well as other communities we are connected to. No matter what we do we will always be Black first. That is generally the first thing people see and their reactions are based on their presuppositions and prejudgments about us as people. We cannot escape our race or culture. We cannot escape our history or our plight. We can only grow from them. So Black prides exist so that our trans folk, young women and young men, girls and boys, men and women old and young can stand up and be proud of who they are and how they love. Recognizing that this is not a choice but a God given right to exist and a call to greatness in the skin and lives we are given.

On the heals of the NYC movement came Atlanta. For nearly a decade or more Atlanta boasted the greatest party on earth. Labor Day weekend was infamous for bringing the noise and bringing the funk, hot bodies in a hot city. The last hurrah of the year was held in the new Black Mecca and the Black Gay Mecca of the USA. Then In The Life Atlanta, Inc., converted a prominent circuit party into one to South's premier Black Prides still during Labor Day. Along with Hotlanta came Houston Splash. Houston Splash moved the beginning of our celebrations of self and community to April. Soon Florida would begin an event in February offering the community a chance to thaw out from the cold of winter in more northern places.

Along came the organizers for Dallas Black Pride, Chicago Black Pride, Minneapolis BGP, South Africa BP, the Annual Ski Weekend, Adodi Conferences, and C.L.O.V.E weekend, until ultimately we may have nearly 36 known Black Pride events and circuit parties. Blacks are involved in almost every major Pride event organized in the country and our presence is still developing. There are hosts of Circuit Parties, that have taken on a life of their own and provide opportunity and for communities to come together. And there are hosts of Black Prides that we hear about but have yet to get a lot of information on or the organizers are just beginning and the event has yet to gain national exposure.

The most exciting thing is that no matter where you live, from Los Angeles and San Francisco to Seattle, to Phoenix to Las Vegas to Oklahoma to Dallas and Houston, to Birmingham to New Orleans to Memphis to Mississippi to Atlanta, to Indiana to Minneapolis to St. Louis, to Chicago to Milwaukee to Detroit, to Philadelphia to Boston, to New York City, to New Jersey, Washington (DC), Virginia, the Carolinas, to Jacksonville to Tampa to Miami to South Africa, Toronto, and Carnival (and others) we can celebrate who we are all over this great country of ours. But it's up to you. Do we want greatness or do we just want to get by. Take a chance. Join your local organization help build pride, if not for yourself for someone else who is waiting to come out and be free.

Let your passions explode throughout this season in powerful and impactful ways. It's good to get your freak on but also get your mind on- things that will build a better future for yourself and our children. Share your passion and the passion of those who work all year long to bring you the best damn circuit prides and Black Pride events in the world.

This retrospective does not contain a complete and exhaustive history/herstory of the Black Circuit party or Black Pride movement. Please forward information (including timelines, organizers names, events, and local histories/herstories, etc., so that a complete historical document can be developed. Forward information to this author at PO Box 1321 Forest Park, GA 30298 or darryl1@mindspring.com) for future publication. Please note names of individual people were omitted so as to avoid misnaming or leaving any one particular leader or organizer out of this retrospective.

Is Miami Ready To Hang With The Big Boys & Girls?

Judging by the success of last years event, I would have to say Yes... *Yes They Are!*

Memorial Day Weekend
SIZZLE2004
MAY 27TH - 30TH
www.Sizzle2004.com
COLONY

For five (5) days beginning on Thursdays 27th May, 2004, party seekers from around the country will convene in sunny Miami, Florida celebrating life, Pride & liberty!

Why Miami! Well, Miami is unlike any other city in the United States. It's a city in the making, unpredictable, ever changing, and simultaneously laid-back. Residents and tourists alike consider Miami a lush, exotic paradise, and a smorgasbord of style, substance, and flare. Furthermore, Miami has proven to be extremely open and accepting of all, cultures, ethnicity and sexual orientations.

Our friendly residents of South Florida invites you to be apart of SIZZLE 2004, the largest African-American and Latino gay & lesbian event to hit the Southeast Coast. Portions of the proceeds from this event will be donated to URBAN Soul Squad. URBAN Soul Squad is a non-profit program of The United Foundation for AIDS steadily at work in the fight against this disease that's destroying lives, families and our communities. URBAN Soul Squad provides outreach based initiative geared towards men of color.

See Next Issue For Complete Details or visit www.sizzle2004.com

At The Beach

Los Angeles Black Pride

AT THE BEACH
SHOREY INC.

dates: ***July 1st - 4th, 2004***

location: Westin LAX Hotel & Point Dume, Malibu

theme: **Gods & Goddesses**

Calendar of Events

Thursday:	7:30-10:30 pm **Papyrus Spoken Word Experience**
Friday:	9:00 am-3:30 pm **Amarna Conference Series**
	12 noon-2:00 pm **Hieroglyphics Literary Café**
	6:30-10:00 pm **Akhet Welcome Reception**
Saturday:	7:00 am-dusk **Pantheon at the Water's Edge: The Beach Party!**
	10:00 pm-4:00 am **Heliopolis After Party**
Sunday:	1:00 pm-8:00 pm **Sed Festival Pool Party**

beginnings: In the summer of 1988, a group of friends decided to come together to organize and enjoy a day "at the beach" on the 4th of July. Each year, this event has grown in participants and in scope. It has become the nation's largest recognized gay pride celebration for persons of color. The Beach Party, with its attendance of approximately 10,000 persons from all over the country, is now the centerpiece for a series of events known as Los Angeles Black Pride.

Produced by the At The Beach Shorey Inc., Los Angeles Black Pride. 4745 West Slauson Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90056, 323/293-4ATB, info@atbla.com or atbla@aol.com.

John Deshler Photography

atbla.com

Save These Dates

APRIL

PHILADELPHIA, PA
Philadelphia Black Pride
APRIL 22-25
www.phillyblackpride.org

MAY

HOUSTON, TX
Houston Splash
APRIL 28 - MAY 3
www.houstonsplash.org

MIAMI, FL
Sizzle 2004
MAY 27-31
www.sizzle2004.com
305-528-7495

WASHINGTON, DC
DC Black Pride
MAY 28-30
www.dcblackpride.org

JUNE

TAMPA, FL
Central Florida Black Pride
JUNE 7-13
www.floridablackpride.net

NEW YORK, NY
Black Pride NYC
JUNE 21-27
www.blackpridenyc.com

JULY

CHICAGO, IL
Windy City Black Pride
JULY 1-4
www.windycitypride.org

JULY

LOS ANGLES, CA
At The Beach LA
JULY 1-4
www.atbla.com

DETROIT, MI
Detroit Pride Hotter Than July
JULY 28 - AUG 1
www.hotterthanjuly.com

AUGUST

JACKSONVILLE, FL
Jacksonville Black Pride
AUGUST 6-8
email: jaxbp@aol.com

SEPTEMBER

ATLANTA, GA
Atlanta Black Gay Pride
- In The Life Atlanta -
SEPTEMBER 1-6
www.inthelifeatl.com

DALLAS, TX
Dallas Black Gay & Lesbian Pride
- In The Life Atlanta -
SEPTEMBER 30 - OCT 4
www.dallasblackpride.com

OCTOBER

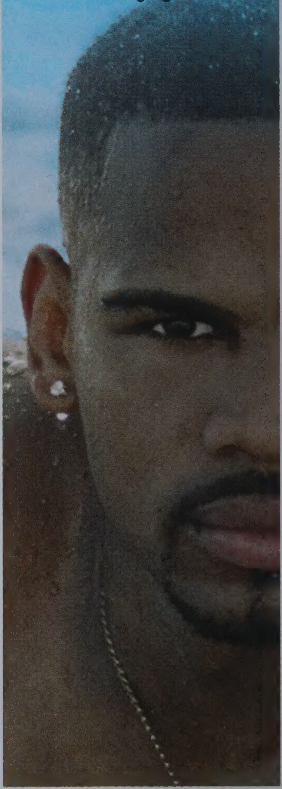
JACKSON, MS
MISSISSIPPI BLACK PRIDE
OCTOBER 14-17
www.mississippiblackpride.com

OCTOBER

NASHVILLE, TN
Nashville Black Pride
OCT 29 - NOV 1
www.brothersunited.com

NOVEMBER

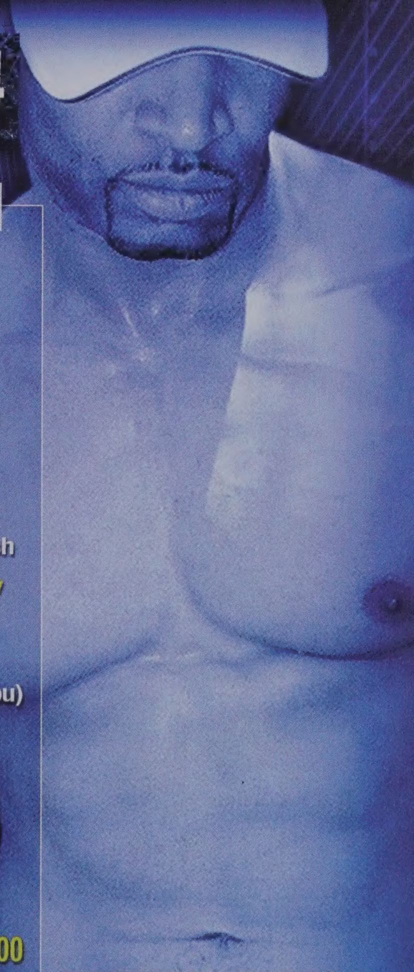
NEW ORLEANS, LA
People of Color NOLA
- In The Life Atlanta -
NOVEMBER 26-28
sharonhoward@girlgotskills.com



Sexy Soldiers Unite... *Will You JOIN THE*

REVOLUTION

4.28.04 - 5.03.04



HOUSTON, TEXAS

THURS. 4.29.04 - TOTAL KAOS

7th Annual Strip Down- N- H-Town

Special Guest From ATL:
K-Rock • Devious • BomBay • Panther
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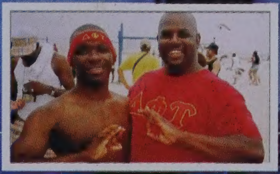

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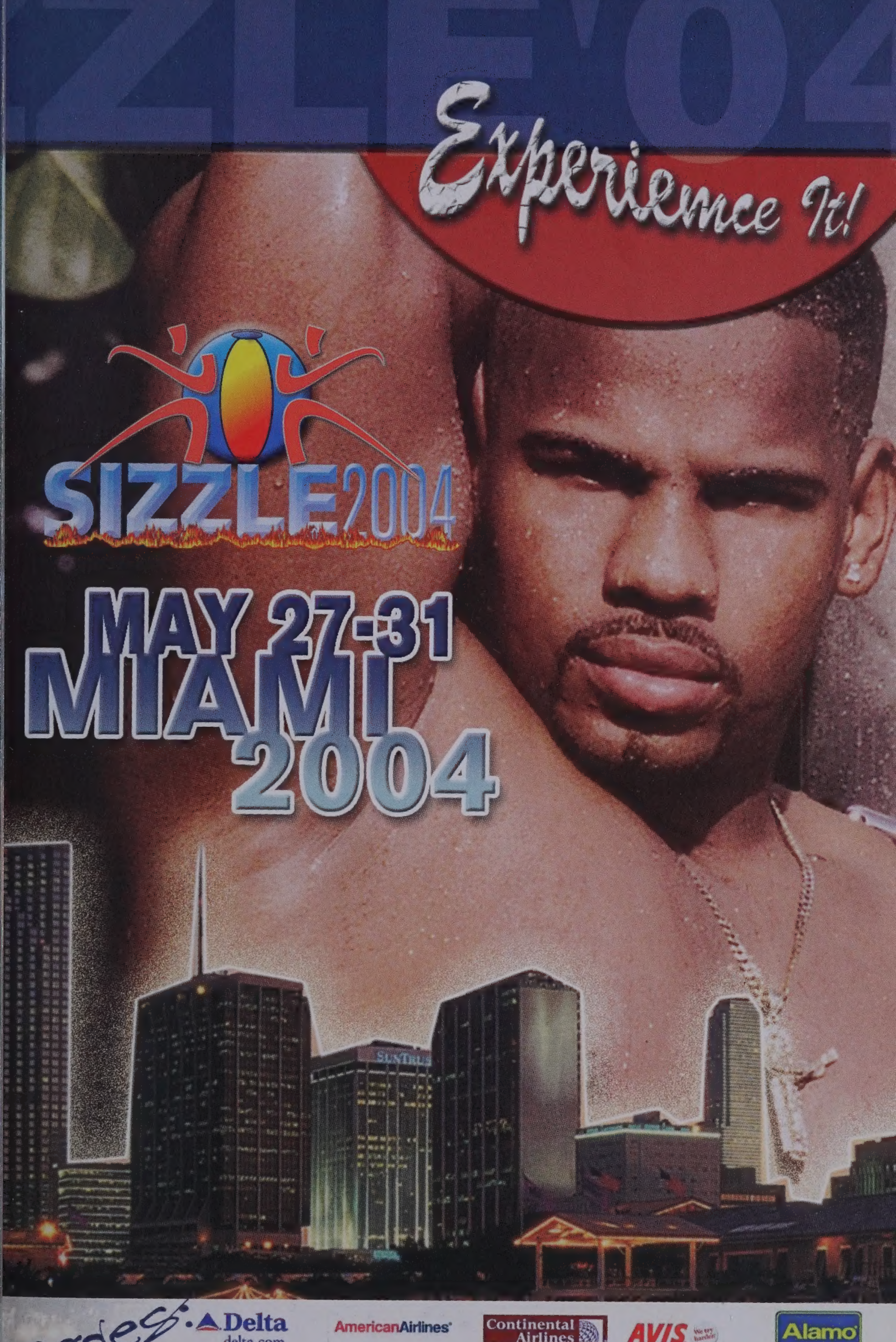

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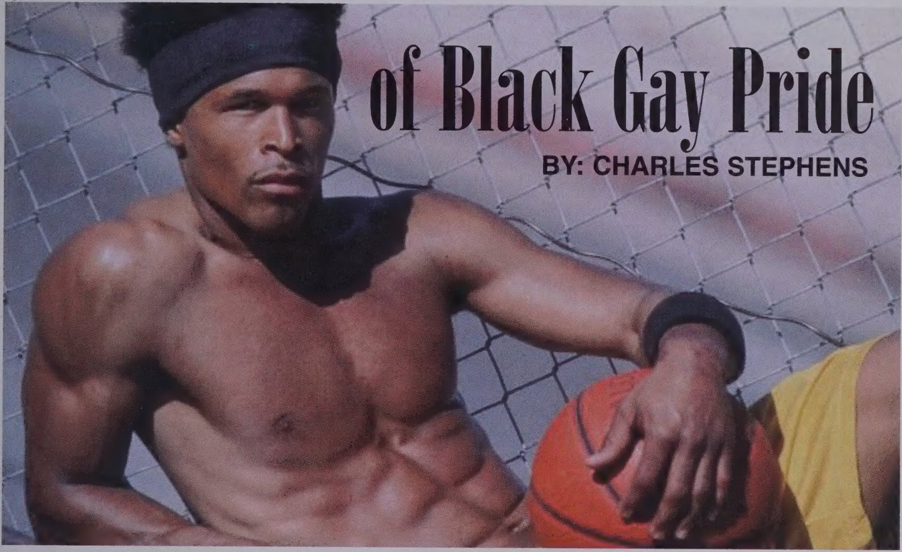

BY: CHARLES STEPHENS

It's a running joke amongst my friends and I that every Labor Day weekend we want to leave the city. Maybe it's the traffic, the wave of glances that welcomes us from the streets of downtown to Lennox Mall, or the intensification of black "fagot-try" in the city. Perhaps it's the circulation of sex party fliers that get passed around from brown hand to brown hand, as other brown hands are passed over for them. However, there is something that brings up the mixed feelings of dread and excitement that is particular to our Black Gay Pride experience.

An acquaintance comes to mind. He got invited to a very well attended and very popular Pride party and a few minutes into the festivities he nearly had a nervous break down. He looked around the room, his palms became sweaty, his heart started racing, and he panicked. Outside, to another friend, after the coast was clear and they were nearing the car, he confided "everyone in there was so attractive, I felt so ugly." Now this particular acquaintance is a big guy, not particular feminine, but not "thugged out" either. He is of average looks, and the part of his body he is most comfortable revealing is his brain. But his own feelings of self-doubt and insecurity were raised to "alert orange" and for his own emotional health he felt, of all times during Black Gay Pride, to not be around black gay men.

It is the unspoken in our community. It is the ugly side to Black Gay Pride. It is the elephant in the room and the ignored contradiction that refuses to be acknowledged let alone dealt with. Sure, if you have spent the majority of the year pumping iron to present the perfect homo thug illusion you might not experience this. If you will pull your shirt over your head without blinking, sag your pants to reveal lines and curves indicative of the all around muscular physique you have meticulously sculpted, then maybe you would not understand. Maybe if you and your friends are those who travel in attractive clusters, Timberlands laced or unlaced appropriately, do-rag just right, hat tilted at the right angle and biceps bulging, you probably have no comprehension of what I am speaking of. But let me break it down for you, it's the sexual politics of Black Gay Pride.

I have always found the whole notion of Black Gay Pride terribly problematic. I can not recall a Black Gay Pride where I left the weekend feeling extremely proud of being black and gay. Most often the experience is one of alienation, isolation, social anxiety and sexual frustration. I always leave feeling at best ambivalent, and at worse angry. The "why" has always escaped me until now, it's the implicit shame and collective self-hatred that Pride has come to symbolize for me. I am left to wonder why do so many of us leave the weekend feeling like crap?

It has been quite common in therapy circles to analyze the mental health implications of the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year season. It has been proven that suicides are often very high during this time of year, and for gay people it is particularly painful. Strained relationships with families and the heterosexist messages implied by holiday marketing can be quite disturbing to many of us. However, I doubt the Holiday season is any match for Pride. After all the holiday card that I am sent with the happy, white, heterosexual, male dominated family frustrates me as much as the Black Pride party flier with the image that looks nothing like me and not like many of us. Sure, he is black and gay, but I am offended that his body looks nothing like mine and not most people I know, and certainly does not present like me or like most people I know. During Black Gay Pride the events are marketed to us with images oppressive to most of us. Is that not some type of collective self-inflicted abuse; a kind of visual masochism.

Of course critics might suggest that I am a mean spirited hater that desires to ruin everyone's fun. However, I beg to differ! What I have seen is standing around various groups of black gay men, and them beating themselves up because they are not young enough, muscular enough, butch enough, and so on. I think to myself, shouldn't we be celebrating ourselves?

One could also argue that it's the fault of these men that they don't love themselves. However, what good is a gathering of Black l/g/b/t folks if the spaces we create are not supportive and affirming to us? Instead of looking around and marveling at how beautiful we are, whatever shape we come in, many of us look around and feel disconnected.

Some might suggest that pride was never the occasion for any type of political consciousness; after all

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it's just a party. That still does not change the fact that the horrible body fascism and "femophobia" so rampant in our communities become intensified during Pride. The "no fats, no fems" sex party culture is just one of the many manifestations of the black gay shame that we have come to call Black Gay Pride. Then there are the well-meaning event organizers. Technically, I could be insinuated in this group. They create spaces for the political consciousness raising alongside the party culture. Very often however, the events are poorly attended and they develop antagonistic relationships with the people they want to reach. Most dangerously however, there is sometimes an implicit self-righteousness which creates a moral hierarchy where those who only want to attend the sex parties at the bottom and those who attend the workshops at the top. This judgmental disposition creates an insider/outsider mentality.

Instead of the insiders being the muscle queens and the outsiders being the big girls and or sissies, the insiders are the community queens and the outsiders are the ones who desire to attend the sex parties and pool parties over the keynotes and workshops. That of course is not to suggest that Pride organizers from D.C., to New York, to our very own Atlanta are not well meaning. But the good intentions sometimes get lost in the subtle judgment.

I also don't want to merely lump both groups and say the sex party organizers and attendees are no better than the political organizers and attendees. I think that that the body fascism, and "femophobia" prevalent in the sexual culture is extremely toxic, dangerous, and frightening. However, the alternative, which might be considered the workshops, panels, and speeches, though less dysfunctional than the "no fats no femmes culture" has its stuff too. And I am saying both stems from a collective shame that is intensified during pride.

Of course there are people during pride who have a good time, and by no means do I want to take that from them. If you have a good time, have a good time, just don't do it at an another brother or sister's expense. Pride at best should be a space for organizing, and sexual expression, and political consciousness, and pool parties, and speeches. Believe it or not we can do it all together. And the muscle worship, the cult of masculinity, and the "femophobia" has to be checked.

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In school and life many of us have been taught to devalue the "I" in ourselves. Statements like "there is no I in team," or "people who write I too much are to self absorbed" and so on serve the potential to keep us humble but if we go too far we also reject the good and greatness of ourselves by not looking at the "I" in our own life. There is an "I " in LIFE. So for a moment forget what someone might think about you or how it may look but look at the good of the "I" of who you are. You can even write these things down for later reflection.

Understand that I recognize that we are not alone in the universe. There is a power and spirit that govern all life. And it is that same spirit that said " I am." That same "I am" lives in you. So who are you. You are more than the sum of your parts and experiences. You are greater than anything that can or has been conceived about you. Whatever they said was not the whole story. Whatever they thought were not the complete facts. You equal more, by your very nature, than just the things you have done or had done to you.

So, what have you done in your life? Just what have you accomplished. STOP. Do NOT think about the things you have not done. Take control of your mind and stay focused on that which has been completed and done in your life. There is plenty of time to consider the mishaps and challenges you face but today just celebrate the greatness of whom you are, right here and right now.

As a child, I was instructed to learn a poem. Its author is unknown but it has had significance in my life. I am grateful to Al and Barbara Fann for making it part of our life's lesson at that period in my life. In counseling/therapy sessions I teach this to help them to find their place with this idea. I offer it to you today:

I Am I
If I think I am beaten, I am
If I think I dare not, I don't
If I like to win but think I can't it's an absolute fact, I won't
Life's battles do not always go to the strong or fast
But soon or late the I who wins is the I who thinks, I Can

The interesting thing about this poem is how we have and have not lived with it. There were times when we allow ourselves to be defeated by things people said, the way they might feel about us, or how we perceived them perceiving us. And there were times when you couldn't care less and never missed a beat to make things happen. There

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 52

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BY DARRYL MOCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

were times when we gave up. There were times when you refused to give up. Personally, there were times when I sacrificed who I was believing it was for the greater good of the community or someone else. I have found, my brothers and sisters, this can never be true. We may choose not to do something but we can never never compromise who we are – because then we are not authentic and the good of any situation requires that we be authentic, honest, and loving.

So this spring make a vow to yourself to be free. To see your fullness come into bloom. Remember the things you have overcome and press towards the next goal. If, by some challenge, you do not meet your expectations learn from the lesson, pick yourself up, and meet the challenge.

Meditate on these thoughts:

I will not be defeated. I will survive. I will that nothing but greatness and goodness come from me and to me right now. I will that my greatest desires be fulfilled in me. I will to love. I will to live. I will to have peace. And what I will to be - I will give unconditionally to others. I accept others just as they are. I will not stand alone but will stand with my sisters and brothers. I will speak up. I will live a fulfilled life. I will not go down in history but will live through history. There is no power that can overtake me because I am ONE with the only power of truth and love that exists. I am whole, perfect, and good just as I am right now. I will seek to be my greatest good and greatest perfection everyday. I will let no one take ME away from ME, ever. I will not try - I will do. I will be authentic, honest, and loving to myself and to others. And so it is. And so it will be.

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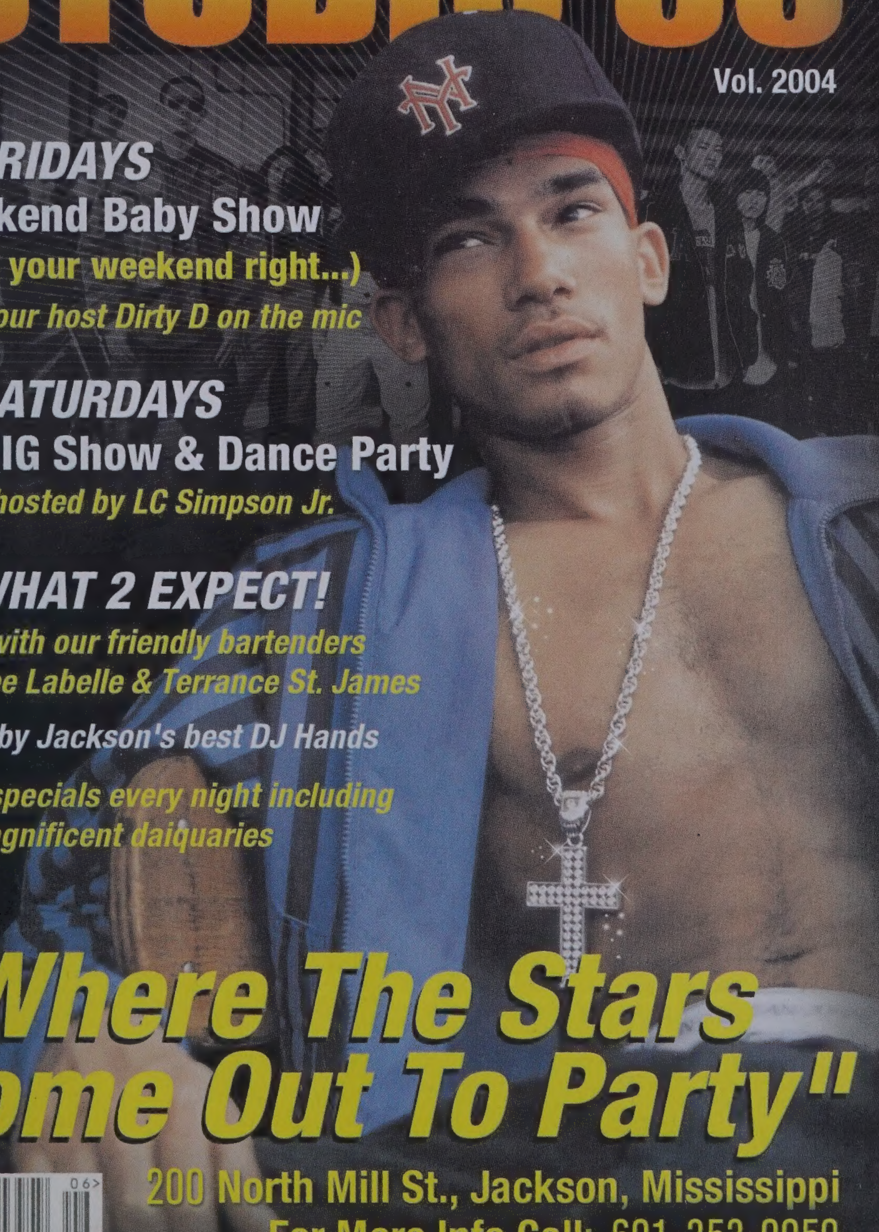

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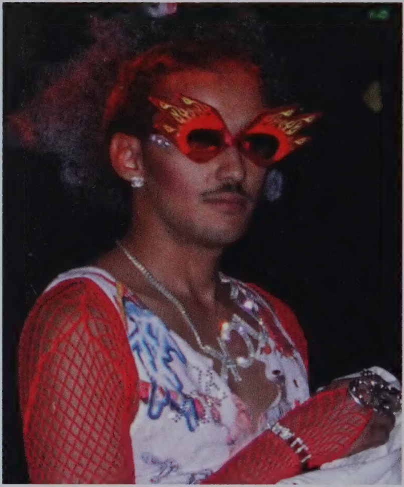

South Florida is an up and coming place for throwing balls. Joining the elite but short list of ball givers, is none other than Danny Cavalli, a motivated and dynamic young man with the business savvy to undertake an event of such risk and magnitude. On Saturday March 6, 2004 Danny's function, held at the Fort Lauderdale Gay and Lesbian Center brought excitement and drama to the floor.

The highlight of the evening was Best Dressed Spectator, which called for designers delight. This category was a riot and saw the Infiniti woman being chopped for not having a purse. The look was expected to be complete. Carely Cavalli flounced on to the runway, in a creation by her brother Javon Cavalli and caught the attention of the judges. She looked divine, in an all black ensemble with matching pumps. Joining her at center stage, was Jay Monolo Blahnik from Philadelphia, but he was no match for her. The judges decided in her favor. After that particular seating, a slew of Floridians decided to put an end to Ms Cavalli's reign but it was not an easy feat, as she looked lovely. However, an ostentatiously and glamorously dressed Infiniti, who looked equally beautiful, but must have had some Judy's on the panel, deprived her of the grand prize. Grand Prize Infiniti.

Another highlight of the evening was Butch Queen face. Zerrick Milan, New Face Of The Year, (Atlanta) and his brother Forever Milan, showed us that as far as face is concerned they have south Florida covered. The night belonged to Forever, as he was having a monster night and looked lovely.

A ball would not be complete without a major controversy and some shade. Let's talk about the controversy first. The Legendary Icon, Face Goddess, Tony Milan walked off the judges panel when his colleagues decided to be shady and vote for Adonis Vivant over Ralphie Milan, who had turned it for Realness With A Twist. Was it really shade or just a matter of opinion? Here is the shade. In Butch Queen Vogue New Way, Heckaby Milan showed the kids that he was still ruling the category after all these years. After receiving Grand Prize he was not satisfied and decided to call out his rival who had trashed his vogueing skills on the Internet. Commentator Selvyn Infiniti sent to the ladies room to get the Vivant who thought he was better than Heckaby. He came out in an all blue ensemble ready for battle. He popped, dipped, stretched and looked good doing it but he was no match for the legendary Heckaby of New York City fame.

Butch Queen Body was the toast of the night. Javon Cavalli and his brother served us sexy, muscular and models body but the fudges decided that the Milan body of Miami was the one they preferred. I disagree, but what the heck? Every last person who walked body that night looked just right.

There were several other hot categories at this function, which made for an entertaining event.

The house of Vivant must be congratulated for a great showing especially during the Grand Prize category where Mother Vivant represented not just her house but also all of Florida in a well-planned and nicely orchestrated presentation. Because of a lack of participation they did not receive the cash, but it was a beautiful production.

Organizer Danny Cavalli, must be commended on a well ran event which ended with more than enough time for the after party at Club Boi.

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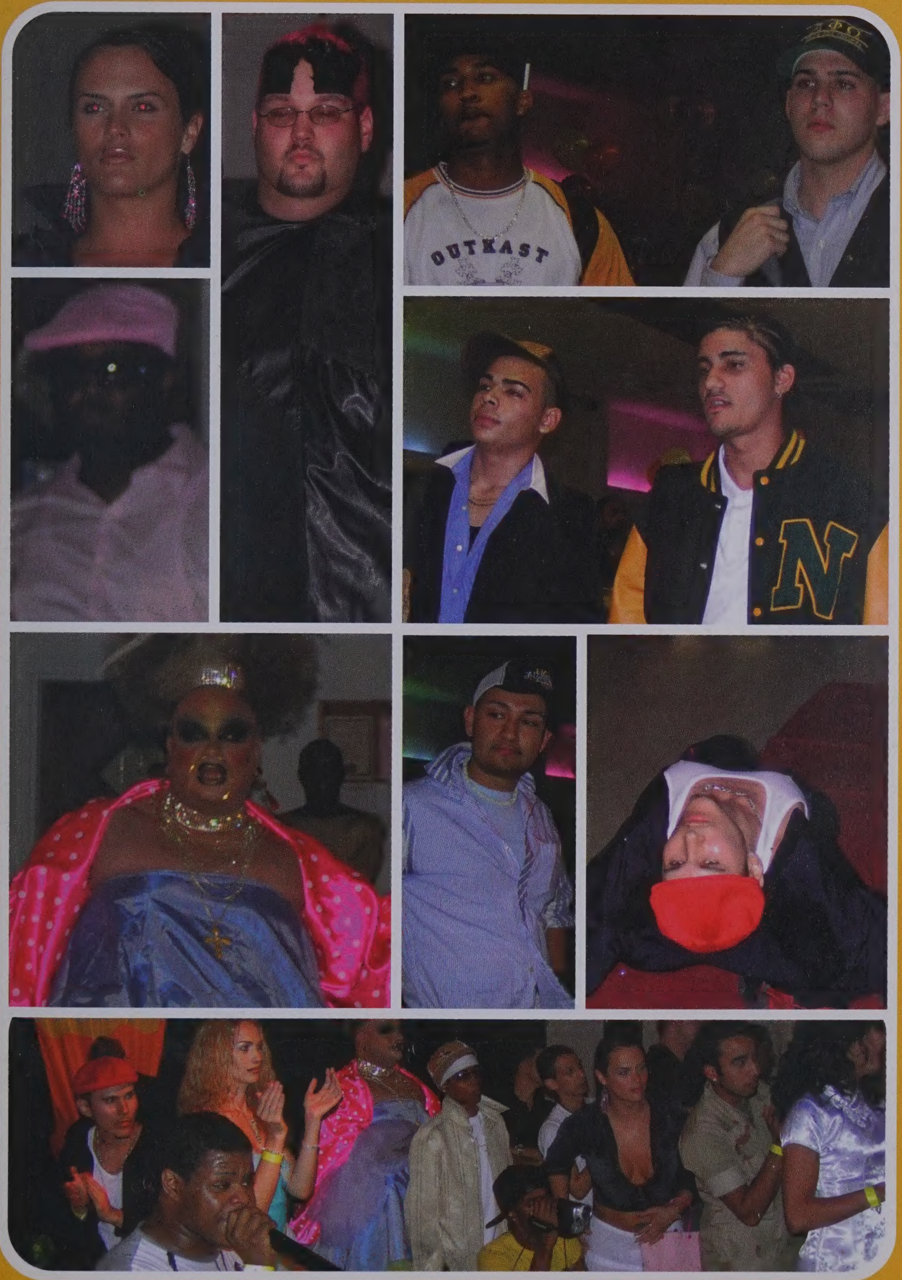

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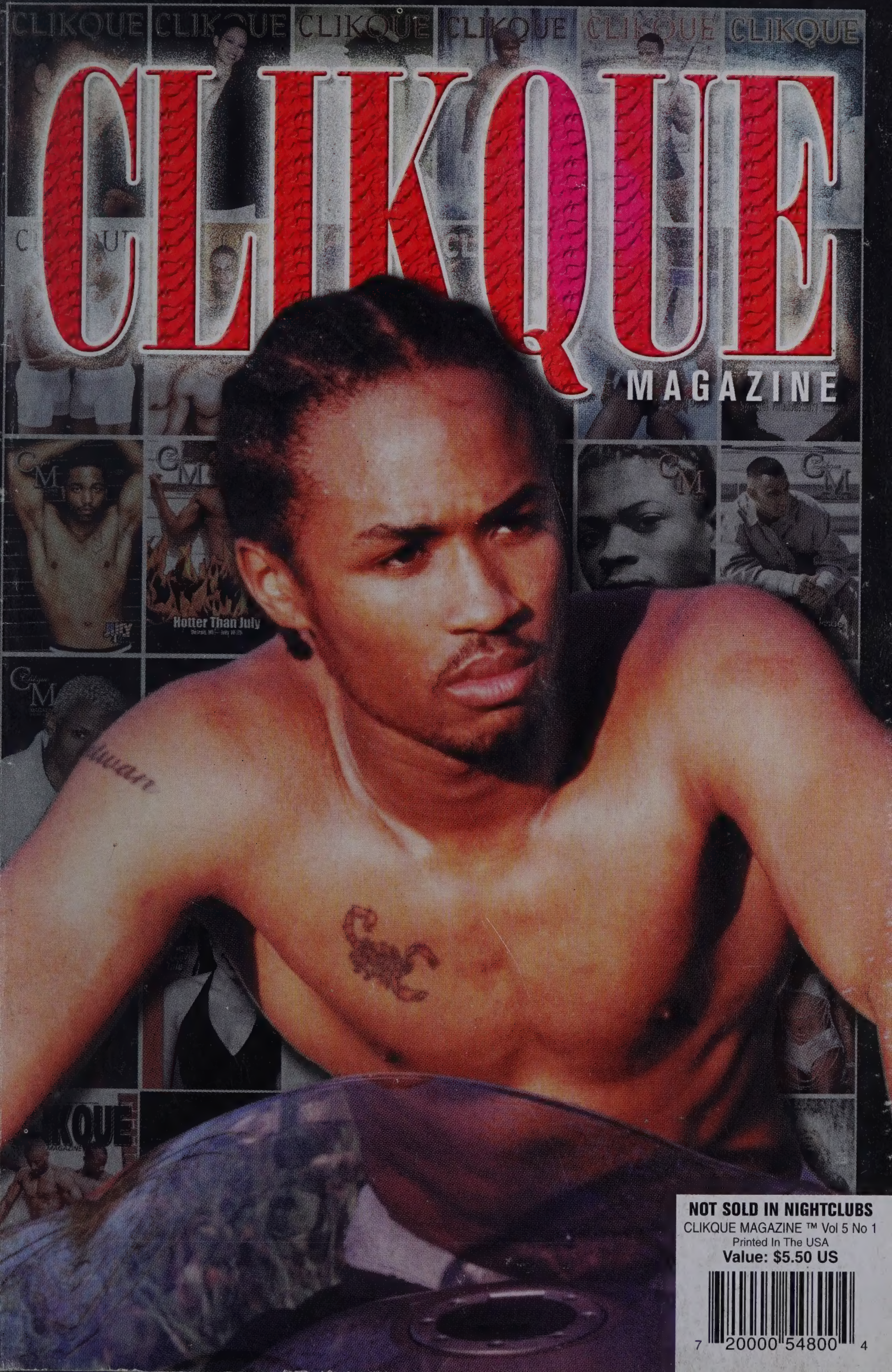
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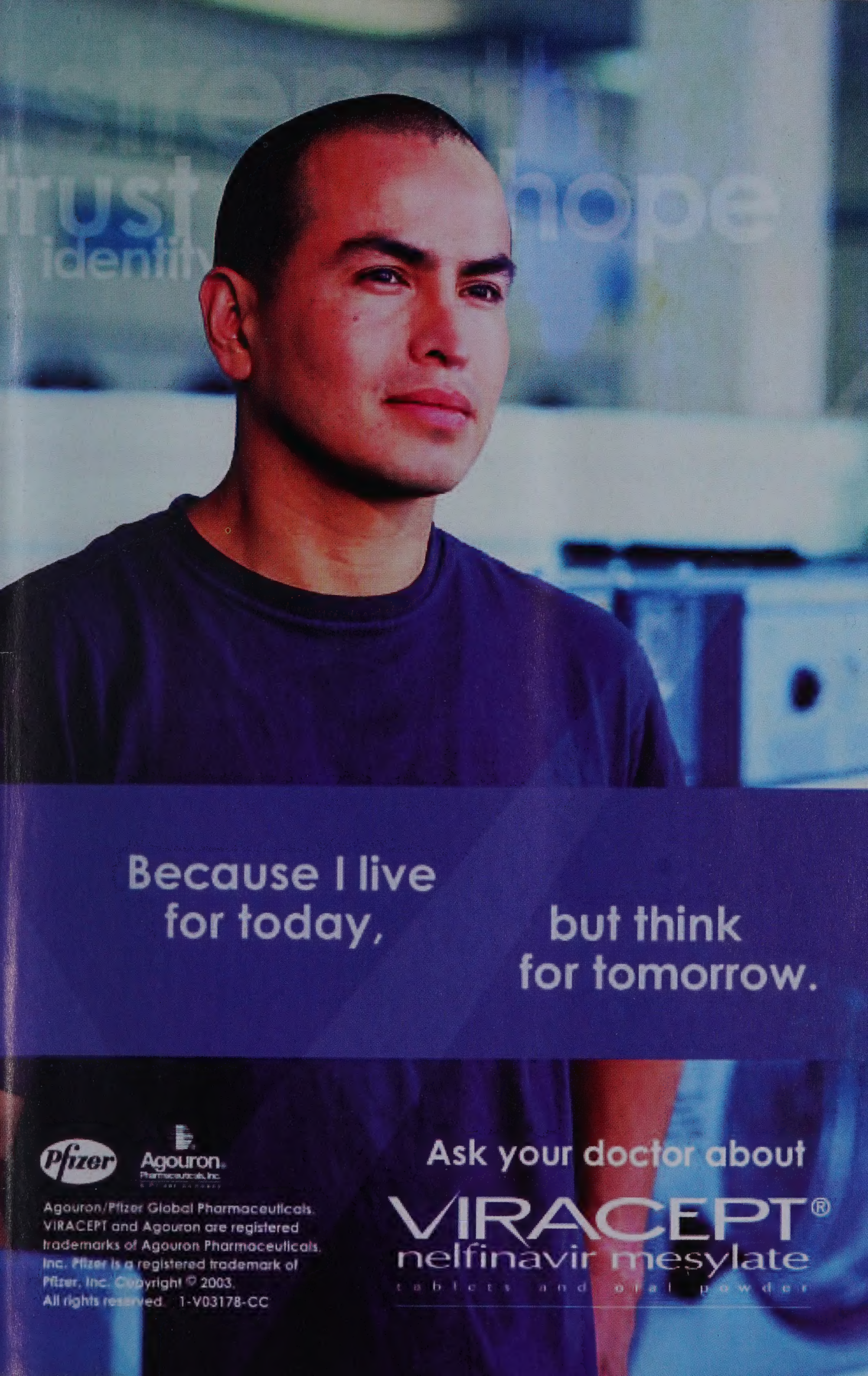
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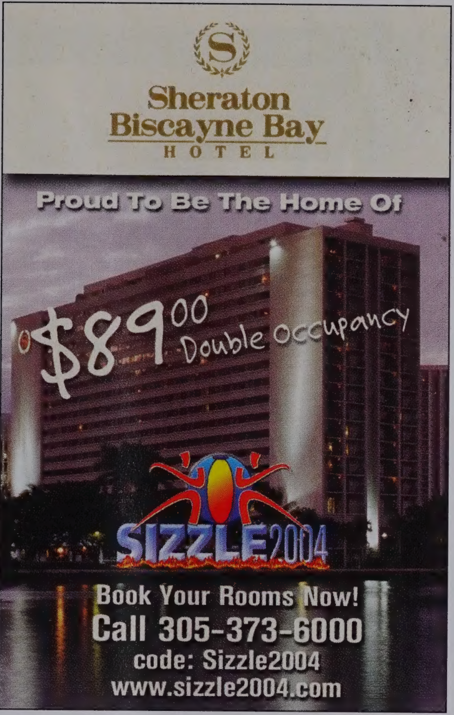
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By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

Black gays launch 'marriage equality' campaign $100,000 ad campaign to promote support for gay rights

WASHINGTON — A newly formed coalition of African-American gay leaders announced plans this week for a $100,000 media campaign to promote support in the black community for same-sex marriage and to fight a constitutional amendment banning such marriages.

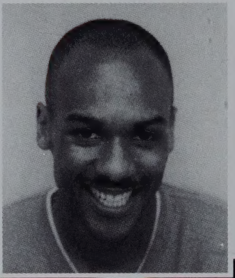
At a Dec. 8 news conference in Washington, D.C., members of the National Black Justice Coalition said their goal, among other things, is to refute claims by anti-gay groups that the majority of African Americans oppose same-sex marriage.

"Do not be fooled by a few recent poll numbers into thinking that marriage will divide the black community in the upcoming election year," said Keith Boykin, a White House aide during the Clinton administration and co-founder of the coalition. "We are here to correct the record in the media and to tell the public that marriage is not a wedge issue for African Americans."

Boykin said the coalition's media campaign calls for raising and spending $100,000 for advertisements targeting the African-American media and to develop a Web site to "counter right-wing misinformation about blacks and marriage equality."

He said the coalition would hold future news conferences to announce new supporters of the campaign, including prominent African-American politicians, civil rights leaders and entertainers.

"By the beginning of the New Year, we will launch the first-ever Web site to counter right-wing misinformation about blacks and marriage equality," Boykin said. "And soon after the New Year, we will be holding new events to announce new supporters of our campaign."



Among those who have already endorsed the coalition's efforts and who pledged support for same-sex marriage, according to literature released by the coalition, are Coretta Scott King, widow of the slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.; comedian and actress Whoopi Goldberg; Democratic presidential candidates Carol Moseley Braun and the Rev. Al Sharpton; U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.); and San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown.

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MTV Said To Revive Plans For ALL GAY NETWORK

For the past several years, Viacom Inc., the media giant that owns such networks as CBS, MTV and Showtime, has volleyed around the idea of producing a gay-themed premium cable network. Just as that idea appeared dead, a report has surfaced that the company is resurrecting plans for the network.

According to reports by Reuters and the Hollywood Reporter, Viacom is renewing plans to launch the all-gay network, known at this stage as Outlet. The channel is to be revived by the MTV Networks, according to the reports, which had worked on the project for several years with its corporate sibling, Showtime Networks.

Showtime first developed the idea a decade ago, but plans for the network were placed on the back burner indefinitely last year.

"Due to the current economic climate, the timetable has slowed down for the development of a new network dedicated to programming to the gay and lesbian audience," Viacom officials said in a statement at the time.

A source at Showtime said they had not heard anything new regarding the project, but directed inquiries to MTV instead. Officials at MTV and Viacom did not return calls seeking comment by press time.

But an independent media company has apparently beaten Viacom to the punch.

In December, Palm Springs, Calif.-based PrideNation Networks launched the country's first 24-hour gay-themed TV network – at least in a manner of speaking.

For $5.95 a month, people anywhere in the world with a broadband computer connection can access the network through their computer. For a separate fee, they can purchase hardware that transmits the network to their TV.

But Allen Edwards, the president of PNN, said the fact that the network wasn't on cable was actually a benefit, not a hindrance.

"Basically what we're able to do is we really have no limits, because we're not on cable, we're not on satellite or mainstream television, so we can really present the community in reality form," Edwards said.

Troubled history for cable gay tv channels

2000 | APRIL

The Palm Springs, Calif.-based Gay Television Network says it will debut Oct. 1 with a 12-hour-a-day programming schedule and offerings to include gay-themed films, a morning talk show, music videos and a program on early gay activism in Los Angeles and New York.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

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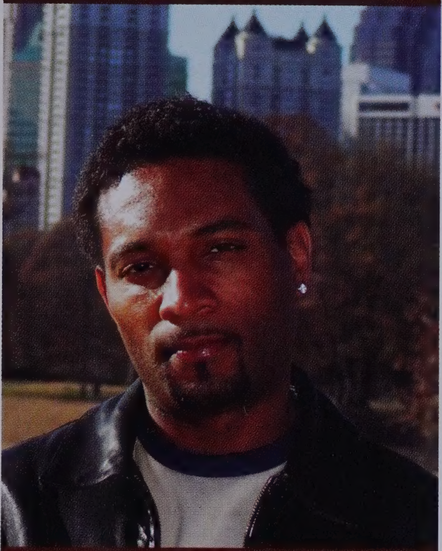
These and many other questions I would like to challenge you to ask yourself. Pondered on the mark you will leave when your license expires on this earth. Big or small, what impact would you have made on society. And most importantly, did you live your life to the fullest of your potential and abilities.

For 2004 and beyond, I challenge you to look deep within yourself. Take stock and evaluate the things that create the most discomfort for you. Begin seeking the you that allows you to live your life at it's fullest potential with the least discomfort possible.

If you have a passion for something, I challenge you to begin fulfilling that passion. A passion is something that I finds fulls me with utter happiness and pleasure. If you like to write or paint, do these things.



Dwight Powell
Editor - In -Chief

I challenge you to move from alongside of the road spectating. Stop living your life vicariously through the lives of others and begin to fulfill your own dreams and desires. Discover the things that move and excite you the most. I challenge you to be independent and do everything possible for yourself. This, in an attempt to make you the best you can be.

Finally, remember that life isn't fair. Resolve to the fact that life isn't fair and it won't ever be. It is with this realization that you will learn to accept and deal the challenges that life throws your way.

Please forward letters to the editor to:

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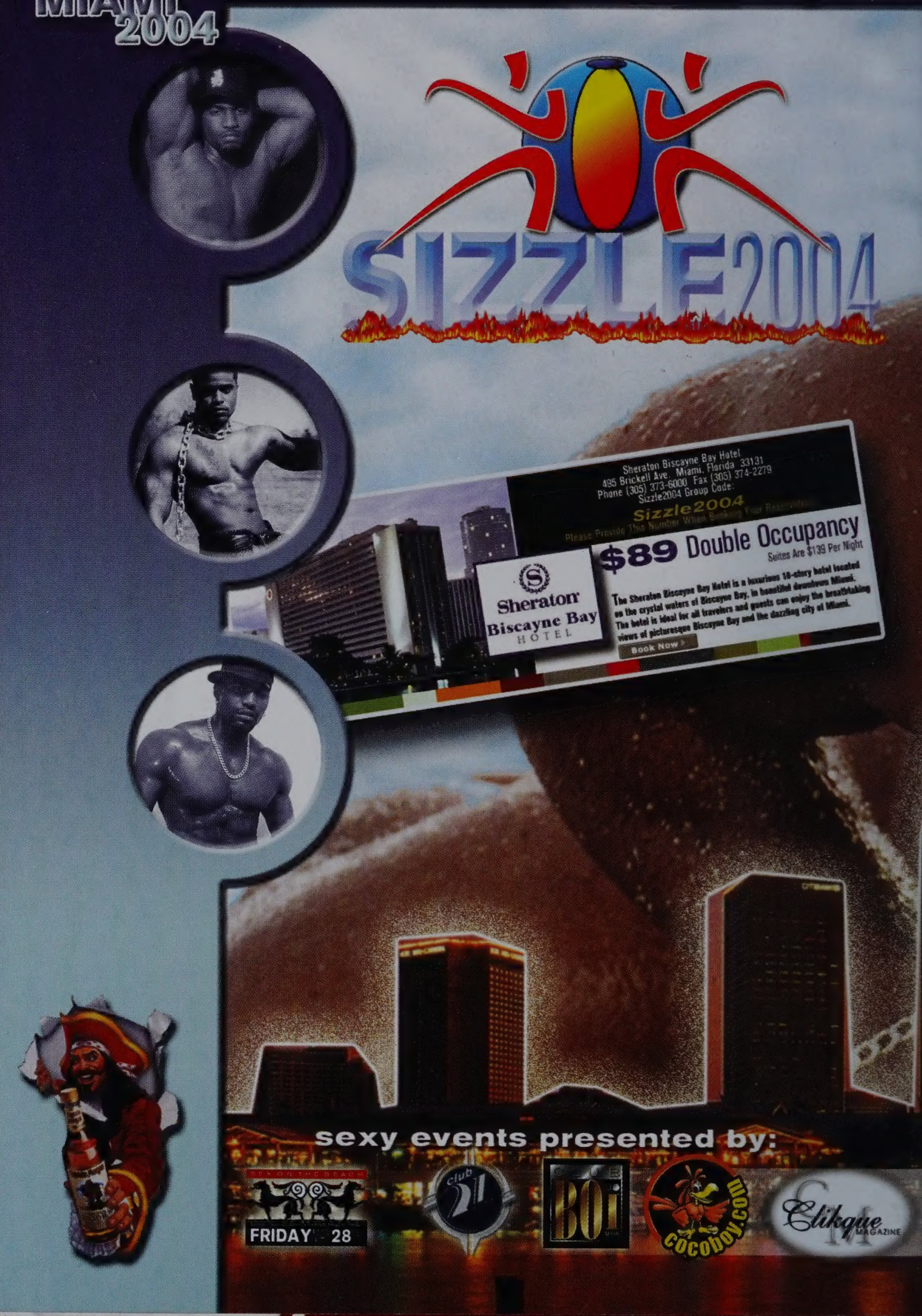
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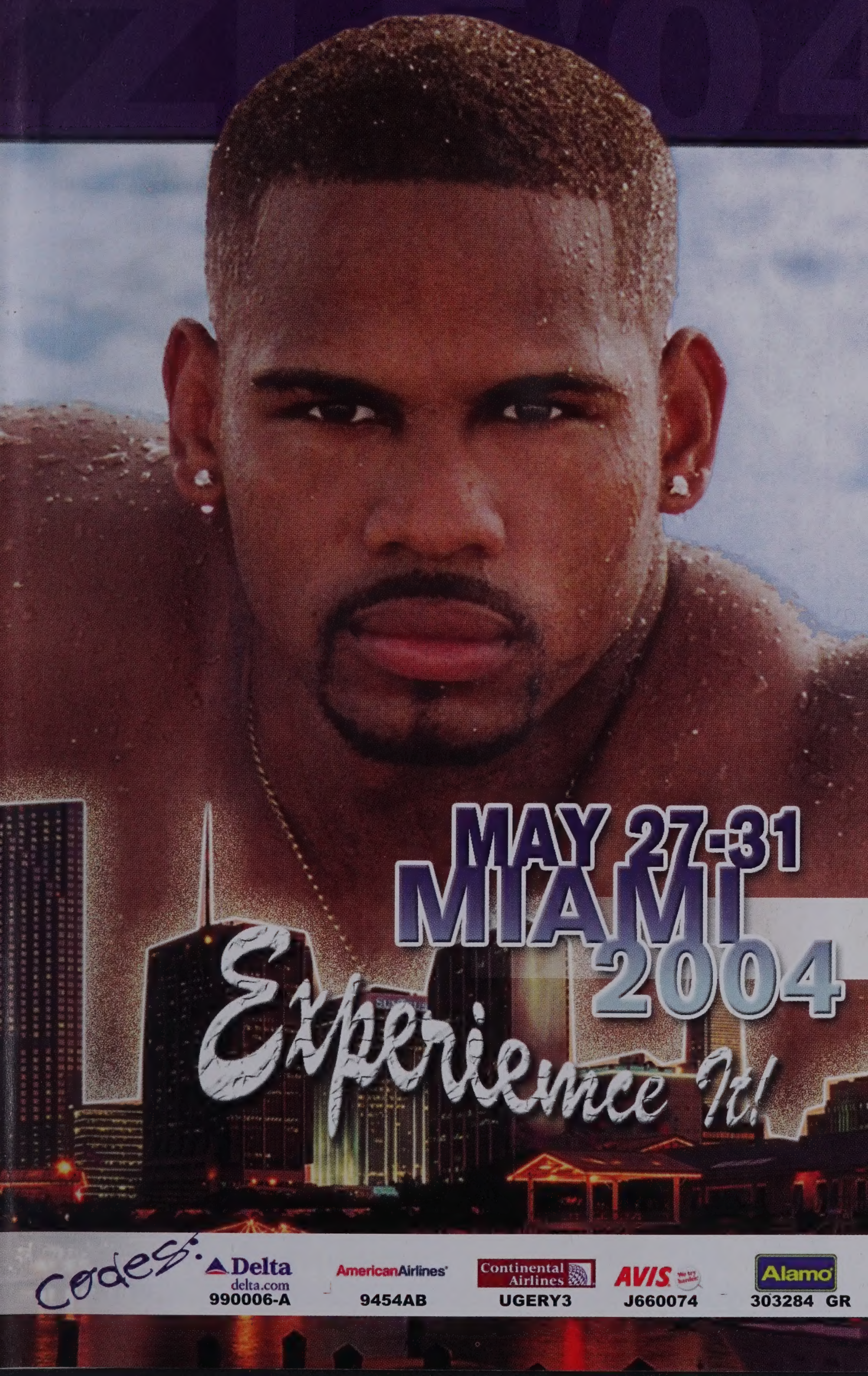
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NY MITCH RUSSO

Six Steps To Wellness

If you spend time at the gym, chances are you're in pretty good physical shape and enjoying your share of admirers wherever you go. But is looking good in a tank top all there is to being healthy? Of course not.

"Keeping your body, mind and spirit in balance is the key," says Robert Volinsky, a New York City-based licensed massage therapist whose business, Restorative Therapies, helps clients achieve overall wellness. "When the important aspects of our lives are running smoothly and make us happy, wellness is a natural result."

Volinsky incorporates a comprehensive approach to health and wellness that includes massage, aromatherapy and Reiki (a sacred healing art that uses the hands and mind). He shared with us the following six steps to wellness that all of us can use:

STRESS BE GONE!

A large proportion of doctor visits are related to stress, according to the National Stress Organization. And one way to reduce stress is to avoid working to the point of burning out. "Take mini-breaks during work, not for coffee or another cigarette, but to breathe," says Volinsky, who suggests taking ten slow, relaxed deep breaths. "It's like a mini-meditation. When you're done breathing, you'll be surprised at how easily this exercise can calm you down."

WORK IT OUT.

"Nothing erases stress and promotes wellness better than a little sweat," says Volinsky. 'Moving around and using your muscles helps your body remove toxins and benefits your heart and lungs." Play tennis, take a walk, run in the park, grab a dumbbell or do anything else you enjoy that gets your body moving and active, says Volinsky. And don't forget to stretch (or better yet, take a yoga class). Studies have consistently shown that stretching not only increases flexibility but also slows aging and promotes better sleep! (If you have health problems, be sure to consult your doctor before beginning an exercise routine).

EAT CONSCIOUSLY.

Notice we're not using the word "diet" here. We're merely talking about having an awareness of the food we eat. "Your meals are a time to give back to yourself, to support your body and your life," says Volinsky. "Be present and conscious while eating. This will not only promote better digestion of food, but amplify appreciation for the wellness you are trying to maintain." Volinsky warns that eating quickly can lead to indigestion and other digestive problems. "Give your salivary glands a chance to function. After all, food is more that just fuel, it's life!"

FEEL THE LOVE.

We're not just talking about the hottie you took to the movies last Saturday night. Love also comes from family, friends and your community. "We are social beings by nature," says Volinsky. "Having time with those we care about is social 'food' we can't live without."

GET YOUR ZZZ'S.

Are you getting enough sleep (seven to eight hours a night)? Not only does adequate sleep help your gym-worked muscles rebuild and grow, it's absolutely crucial to maintaining health and wellness, says Volinsky. "Sleep is the time our body rejuvenates and restores itself. Many people are sleep-deprived, which can dramatically undermine their health, making them more prone to illness, stress and depression."

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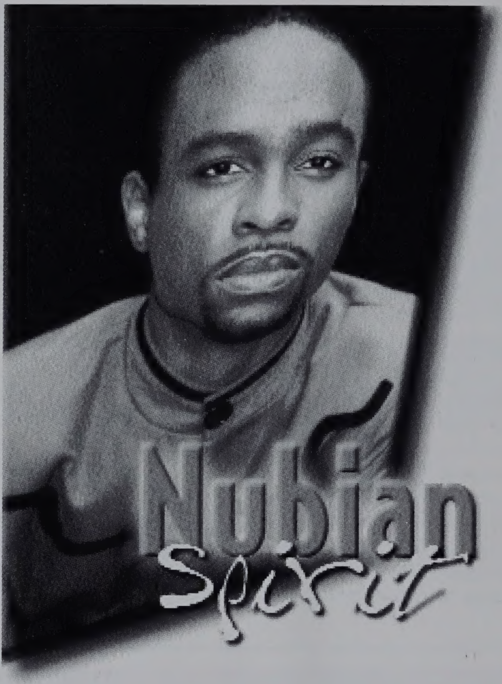

Becoming Your Ultimate Self

Harambee (Let us come together): *It is indeed great to be back with you again. Since the beginning NubianSpirit has been about personal power and triumph. With these messages it is my desire to encourage us to see beyond the obvious and look into the depths of our souls and psyches to resurrect our potential and resolve to continue to strive to be the best we can be, always. In so doing we are on the path of becoming our Ultimate Self.*

As you move into 2004 and seek your place in this New Year, first take an inventory of your life and your goals. Encourage yourself to look not only at what you resolve to do, or stop doing this year, but also at the "why" of these resolutions. The "why" will help you to develop honest ways to deal with the reasons the resolutions exist. For each resolution you would embark on a similar fact finding mission. For instance, if your resolution is to lose weight or get more "fit" (common for many) then taking a good inventory of why you want this will help you gain focus and increase your chances for success (this year!). If you find that you want to lose weight or get fit in order to be more attractive to someone else, then you might also seek ways to find yourself more attractive to yourself. Then no matter how you look you will love yourself and this self-love will empower you to work hard at looking and feeling your best for yourself which will make you much more attractive to that "someone else."

If, however, you remain focused on looking better for someone else then your focus will be on other's reactions to you and if, for some reason, the people you present yourself to do not react the way you want or need then your resolve eventually is lost due to the lost sense of accomplishment or appreciation from those "others." The point is simple you cannot find happiness outside of yourself. It takes you understanding why you do what you do and why you want what you want to insure that you get exactly what you need and want out of life. If your goals are contingent on what someone

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

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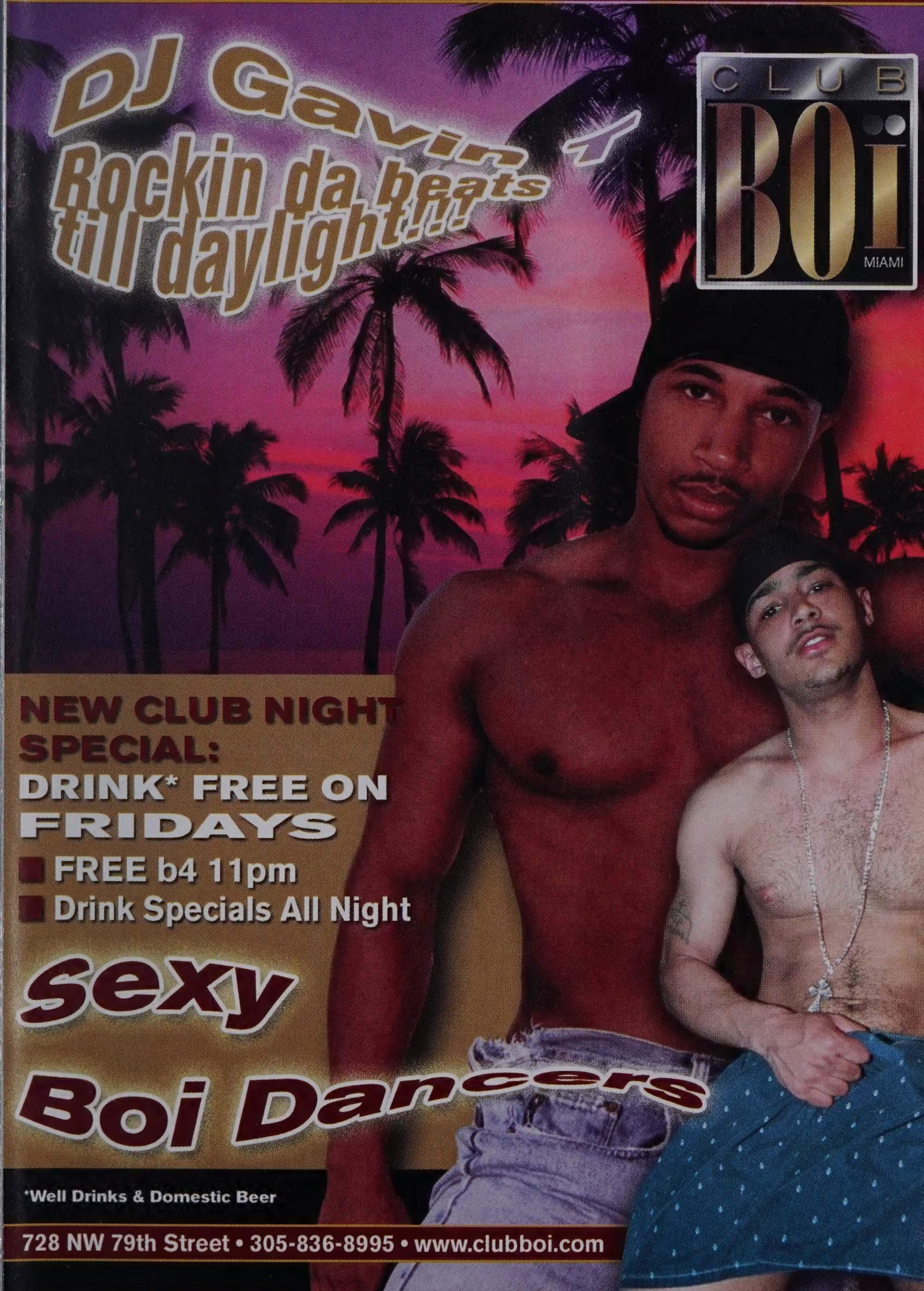

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STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

else thinks, says, or does then your entire resolution is outside of your control and failure is eminent.

My point, beloved, is "stop doing the same things over and over again, expecting different results- this is by definition is insanity." If you find yourself in the same place this year as in last year, or years gone past, then -choose to do something different today! It is OK to seek counseling and uncover the hidden desires of your heart or the negative scripts that play in your mind and undermine your success. Only you can find these answers and only you can use the key to unlock your hidden treasures. Counselors, ministers, advisors, and seers can only point the way, reflect back what you are saying (verbally and nonverbally), and offer insight so you can choose to use or discard the stuff inside of you. Believe me there is stuff you can use (strengths) and stuff you can discard (baggage).

If like most of us we resolve to be better, have more, and do more in this new year; then some quiet moments of meditation and reflection -honest soul searching will yield powerful results on your journey to being your ultimate self.

Take a moment to reflect and meditate on these words:

I live with integrity, using my imagination for good and to be a caring and courageous person. I take full responsibility for my life and offer respect for the lives of those around me. I will live with the power of love and refuse to be drawn into the negative spiral of hatred or fear. I am all that I am supposed to be and I will be nothing less that my perfect self today.

Beloved stay on the path and you will be your Ultimate Self long before you know it; we will share this journey together. Until then... Peace and Blessings.

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

NOVEMBER

Launch plans for Gay Television Network delayed.

2001 | JANUARY

Officials with the Gay Television Network reschedule the channel's launch to Jan. 23, then move it again to Feb. 2, on the Dish Network. Dish later says the announcement of an agreement with GTN is premature.

MARCH

The Gay Television Network changes the name of its gay cable channel to Triangle Television Network after its satellite provider raises concerns about using the word "gay" in the channel's name.

SEPTEMBER

Triangle Television Network misses Sept. 5 launch, the fifth one the network has announced since November 2000.
Canadian broadcast regulators order Shaw Communications to offer PrideVision, making it that nation's first gay-themed television channel.

2002 | JANUARY

Viacom properties Showtime and MTV announce they will research the viability of a gay-oriented network. Later, informal advisory panels meet in several U.S. cities. Panel members say a spring 2003 launch date is discussed with the working name "Outlet."

APRIL

Triangle Television Network apparently inks an agreement with Dish Network to carry the channel, but a launch date is not announced.

DECEMBER

Headline Media Group, the parent company of PrideVision, slashes the network's staff amid budget problems.

2003 | JULY

PrideVision announces July 12 that it is available in U.S. through Largo Communications, a satellite distributor in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., that provides access to Canadian satellite company Bell ExpressVu.

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Ten Things To Know When Buying A Home

Here is an overview of the most important points. For a more detail look into the items listed below, visit www.clikque.com

1. Don't buy if you can't stay put.

If you can't commit to remaining in one place for five years or more, then owning is probably not for you, at least not yet. With slow appreciation and the costs of buying and selling a home, you may end up losing money if you sell any sooner than that.

2. Start by shoring up your credit.

Since you will most likely need to get a mortgage to buy a house, you must make sure your credit history is as clean as possible. A few months before you start househunting, get copies of your credit report. Make sure the facts are correct. Fix any problems you discover.

3. Aim for a home you can really afford.

The rule of thumb is that you can buy housing that runs about two-and-one-half times your annual salary.

4. Don't worry if you can't put down the usual 20 percent.

There are a variety of public and private lenders who, if you qualify, offer low-interest mortgages that require a down payment as small as three percent of the purchase price.

5. Buy in a district with good schools.

This advice applies even if you don't — and won't — have school-age children. Reason: When it comes time to sell, you'll learn that strong school districts are a top priority for many home buyers — thus helping to boost property values.

6. Get professional help.

Look for an exclusive buyer agent, if possible, who will have your interests at heart and can help you with strategies during the bidding process.

7. Choose carefully between points and rate.

When picking a mortgage, you usually have the option of paying additional points – a portion of the interest that you pay at closing – in exchange for a lower interest rate. If you stay in the house for a long time – say five to seven years or more – it's usually a better deal to take the points. The lower interest rate will save you more in the long run.

8. When househunting, bring your camera.

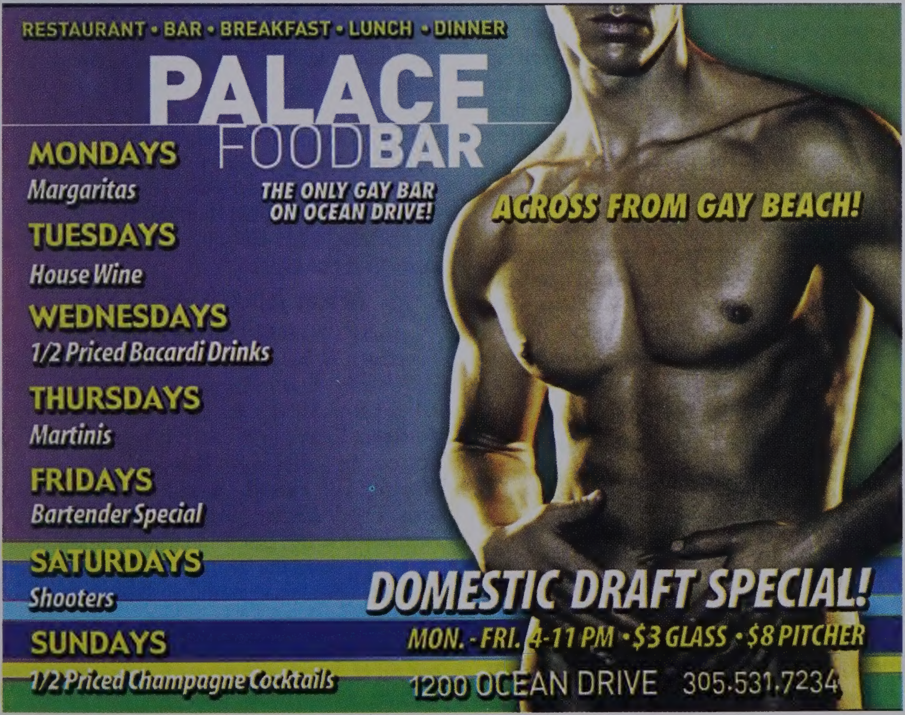
Or at least a notebook to jot down reminders, since after you look at a half-dozen or so houses the details begin to blur in your mind. Best choice would either be an electronic camera that lets you take notes right on the image, or a Polaroid so that you can scribble comments in the margins.

9. Do your homework before bidding.

Your opening bid should be based on the sales trend of similar homes in the neighborhood. So before making it, consider sales of similar homes in the last three months. If homes have recently sold at five percent less than the asking price, you should make a bid that's about eight to 10 percent lower than what the seller is asking.

10. Hire a home inspector.

Sure, your lender will require a home appraisal anyway. But that's just the bank's way of determining whether the house is worth the price you've agreed to pay. Separately, you should hire your own home inspector – preferably an engineer with experience in doing home surveys in the area where you are buying. His or her job will be to point out potential problems that could require costly repairs down the road. ***GOOD LUCK!***



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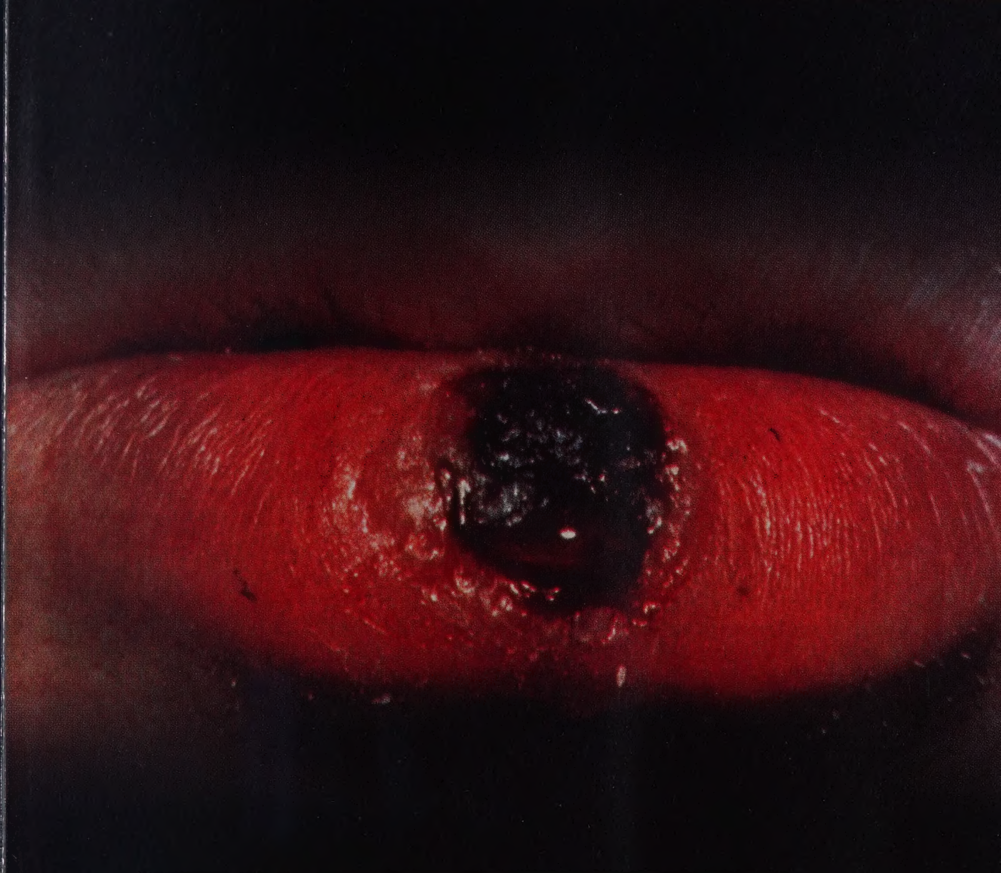

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HEALTH

BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

Regarding Bayard Rustin The Untold Story Of A Gay Activist

The popular history of the civil rights movement centralizes the work of two key figures, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. While Parks is one of the few well-known female activists of that era, her role has been reduced to that of an uppity sister who spontaneously stood up for herself by sitting down in a Montgomery bus. These sexist historians do not tell us that Parks was a carefully selected organizer and that this was a planned act of resistance. Since Martin Luther King was ill prepared to lead the ensuing boycott, a revered pacifist named Bayard Rustin was summoned by preeminent organizer A. Phillip Randolph to train King in non-violent philosophy and grass roots organizing. While Parks has received major acclaim during her lifetime, widespread recognition of Rustin's contributions still eludes him 16 years after his death. Mainstream and black media alike rarely mention him, and when they do, they tend to omit the fact that he was openly homosexual. His immeasurable value to that movement has been only partially, begrudgingly cited. His values and ideals hold many lessons for contemporary black gays striving for self-acceptance and social equality.

Rustin came from a close-knit family of black Quakers. Because he was born out of wedlock, his maternal grandmother Julia chose to raise him with the help of numerous relatives. His numerous accomplishments include organizing the "Journey of Reconciliation" in 1947 which defied segregation laws by sending black and white organizers riding together on public transit; teaching and organizing pacifist resistance in Africa, Chile and Poland; serving as King's key advisor during the Montgomery bus boycott; and organizing the fabled 1963 March on Washington. In 1952, Rustin was arrested in Pasadena for having sex in a car with two men and was later fired him from the Friends of Reconciliation. Many civil rights organizers later distanced themselves from him because of this scandal and his refusal to hide his homosexuality even though they benefited largely from his talents.

In subsequent years, veteran activists failed to note Rustin's efforts thereby obscuring one of their key leaders. Black

BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

gays and lesbians in the '80's were among the first to educate themselves and others about his legacy. Other Countries, the New York based black gay male writers' collective, published a journal that featured an interview with Rustin shortly before his death in 1987. Throughout the nineties, black lgbt activists in Atlanta and other cities named rallies, programs, and awards after him in order to reclaim his legacy. Several biographies have been published which tend to portray Rustin as a seminal unsung hero whose views, affiliations and sexual orientation set him at odds with some of his contemporaries. Rustin received posthumous attention in 2002 when a group of residents from his birthplace West Chester Pennsylvania opposed the school board's decision to name a high school after him because he was briefly a member of a Communist youth and he was openly gay. Some measure of long awaited justice was served when the school board refuted the petition and named the school after their most distinguished son. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2003, PBS aired the long overdue documentary "Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin". During that weekend, Hands On Atlanta presented a screening and public discussion of the film at the MLK Center for Non-Violent Social Change.

You owe it to yourself to find out more about this astute strategist. It is said that service is the rent we pay for our stay here on earth. The only meaningful way for us to really honor Rustin is to emulate him by making our own unique commitment and contribution to human rights. Through learning about Rustin, we may acquire the tools to extricate ourselves from the myths that constrain us today.

We often tell ourselves that we are not skilled or bold enough to contribute to those causes we may sincerely believe in. "Leader worship," perpetuates the fallacy that activism is the exclusive domain of those who possess specific talents, and look and speak in certain ways. We may think we must be out or publicly visible in order to make a difference. We don't all have to serve like Rustin in order to serve. Instead we can be inspired by his example to give what we can in accordance with our own gifts and do that excellently. Many of us are closeted or uncomfortable with high profile movement work, but that doesn't have to prevent us from taking a step beyond where we have gone before. You may maintain a low profile and go online or visit a library and read an essay by Audre Lorde, James Baldwin or Rustin himself. You can send a check to ZAMI, which offers annual scholarships to black lesbian and gay male students or Unity Fellowship, an affirming church led by an openly gay pastor.

Rustin With Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Rustin With Bishop Desmond Tutu

Along our lifelong journey toward self-love, brothers in the life are often derailed by the myth that we have to be as overtly masculine as possible in order to reconcile our homosexuality with our manhood. As a middle-aged gay man, I mourn the loss of a diversity of male archetypes once commonly displayed in the life. Before today's hyper-masculine norms (an affliction I often nickname "butch queen-itis") dominated black gay male sexual and social culture, we celebrated a broader spectrum of gender expression. The confluence of AIDS, unhealed

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 26

BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

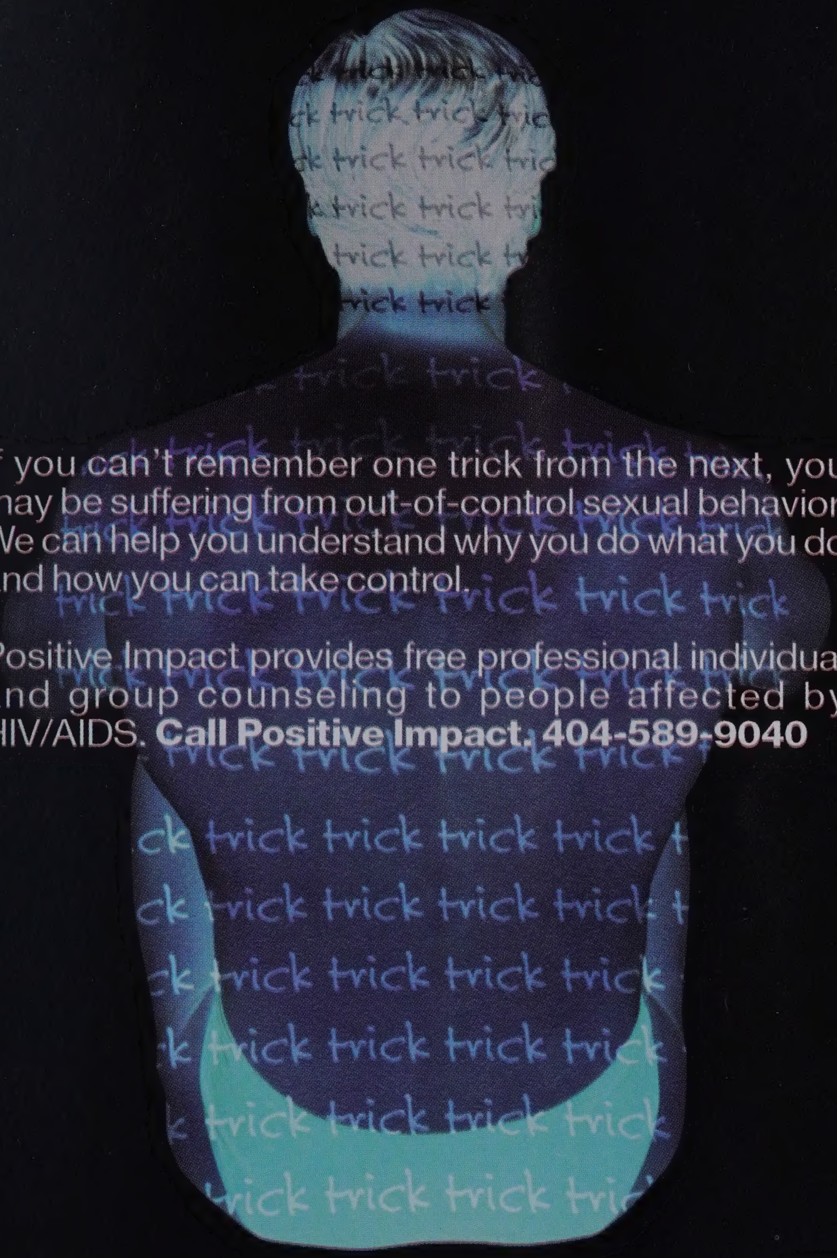
shame, and this deification of the masculine image have wiped the effete man off our cultural landscape. Ironically, without the queens, there would have been no Stonewall uprising nor the resultant gay liberation movements and cultures that followed. None of the clubs where the DJs spin songs that dehumanize gays and women, where we no longer have a place for sissies, would have been built were it not for the queens we so readily disown. As you become more acquainted with Rustin you may learn to appreciate the fact that he was fairly effeminate. You could clock it from an airplane. He apparently was not concerned with butching it up in order to win acceptance. And while he was denied his full due, for the most part he was regarded as a black man of service, a brother who demonstrated a tenacious love for his people.

Another enduring myth is that brothers who partner with white men are automatically "snow queens" who are disconnected from black people and ineffectual as community organizers. The contributions of popular black gays who have dated whites have been devalued by fellow activists and those who have done far less for the cause. If you watch the Brother Outsider film, you will observe that Rustin had a series of white lovers. His relationships with white men did not diminish his participation on the main stage of black liberation long before his detractors ever picked up a picket sign or dismissed him as an uncle tom sexual pervert. Consider this the next time you see yourself or someone else berating someone simply because he dates a white person.

The name that we call ourselves as quite a point of contention in black list serves, conferences and discussion groups across the country. We often make specific assumptions about one's pride in their race or sexual orientation based on what label they choose. While some same-gender loving folks think that people who identify as gay blindly follow white gay agendas, some gay blacks believe that those who don't call themselves "gay" must be ashamed of being homosexual. Rustin never prioritized gay liberation as a focus for his work. At the same time, he was, by contemporary standards, extremely "out" and is now heralded as a black gay legend. Baldwin, the most well known openly homosexual black writer, refused to call himself gay or specifically politicize his sexual orientation. Yet his work placed homosexuality in the context of the universal human need of love and championed the rights of all to be free to love whomever they choose. A deeper understanding of how these men framed their sexual identities may help us to relinquish the confining myth that we need to call ourselves a common name to work toward common goals.

We have a lot to gain from the example of Rustin's illustrious life. His near erasure reminds us of the sanctity of our history, and demands that we rediscover our sister and brother outsiders and tell their stories to our young. We need engaging and accessible ways to teach ourselves about our forebears so that they become relevant to our political, sexual, and cultural lives. I invite you to commit to learn more than you already know about at least one black gay freedom fighter of any era. As we come upon Black History month, you can extend the list of usual suspects to include people like Fannie Lou Hamer, Pat Parker, Essex Hemphill, Marlon Riggs, Assoto Saint and others. You may find yourself moved to organize an informal group discussion, arrange a black gay history book club, or volunteer with an organization that serves us. You may be surprised to discover the power you have to expand your own consciousness and make positive change in your community.

Mr. Washington was lovingly raised by Anna and Leon Washington in Queens, New York and has lived in Atlanta for 11 years. His writings have been published in Clikque, Venus, Arise, Washington Blade, Southern Voice, Atlanta Voice, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, He currently serves as the Volunteer and Training Coordinator for Positive Impact, which provides mental health services for people affected by HIV. He can be reached at cwash360@cs.com.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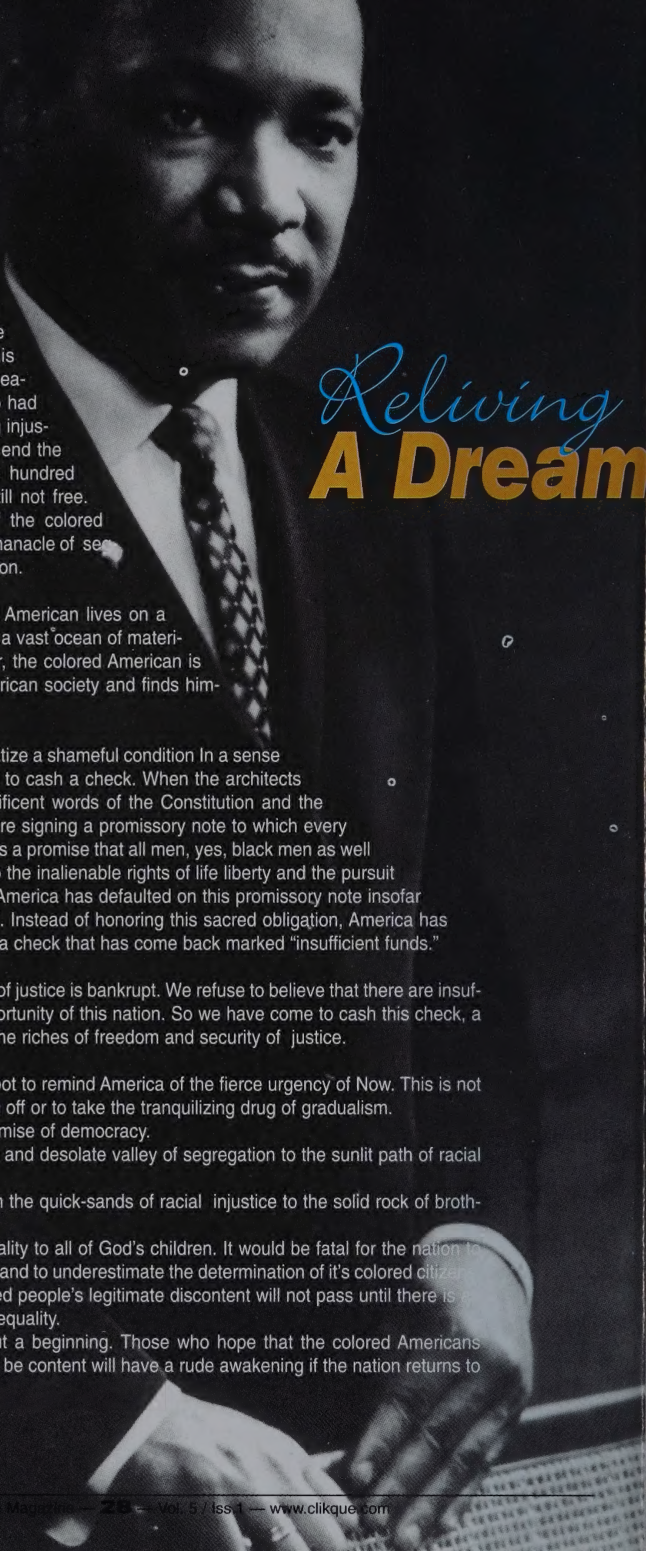

Reliving A Dream

Aug. 28, 1963

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon of hope to millions of slaves, who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But one hundred years later, the colored America is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the colored American is still sadly crippled by the manacle of segregation and the chains of discrimination.

One hundred years later, the colored American lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the colored American is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land.

So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition In a sense we have come to our Nation's Capital to cash a check. When the architects of our great republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed to the inalienable rights of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given its colored people a bad check, a check that has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and security of justice.

We have also come to his hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is not time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.

- Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy.
- Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.
- Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick-sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.
- Now is the time to make justice a reality to all of God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of it's colored citizens. This sweltering summer of the colored people's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.

Nineteen sixty-three is not an end but a beginning. Those who hope that the colored Americans needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual.

By Rev. Dr. Martin Luther Kin Jr.

There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the colored citizen is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

- We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities.
- We cannot be satisfied as long as the colored person's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one.
- We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "for white only."
- We cannot be satisfied as long as a colored person in Mississippi cannot vote and a colored person in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of your trials and tribulations. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by storms of persecutions and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our modern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you, my friends, we have the difficulties of today and tomorrow.

- I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.
- I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.
- I have a dream that one day out in the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.
- I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.
- I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by their character.
- I have a dream today.
- I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; that one day right down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.
- I have a dream today.
- I have a dream that one day every valley shall be engulfed, every hill shall be exalted and every mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I will go back to the South with.

- With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.
- With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.
- With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to climb up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my father's died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!
And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

- Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.
- Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that, let freedom, ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.
- Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi and every mountainside.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every tenement and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. ThankGod Almighty, we are free at last."

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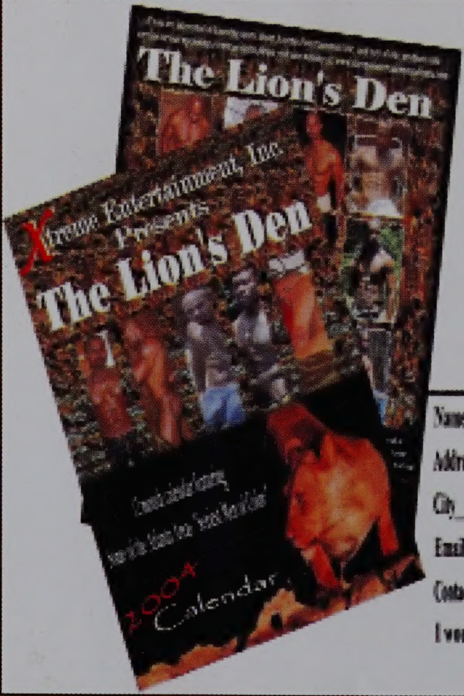

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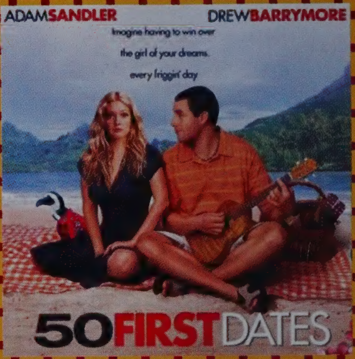
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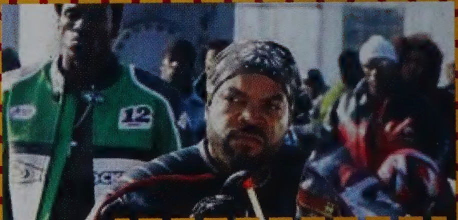
50 FIRST DATES RELEASE 1/16/04

A veterinarian (Adam Sandler) falls for a woman (Drew Barrymore) who suffers from short-term memory loss. Because of her condition, every day their love is new – literally. He must woo her again and again or she will forget that he's the one for her.

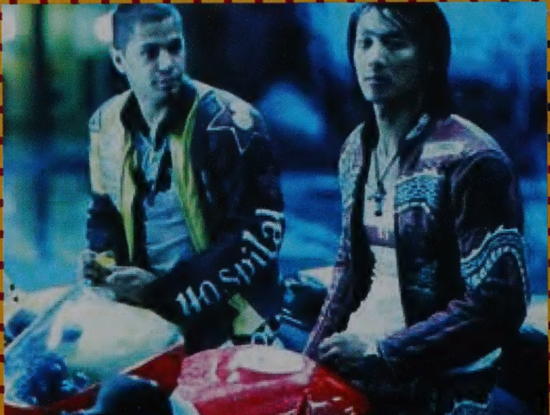
ALONG CAME POLLY RELEASE 1/16/04

Ruben (Ben Stiller) watches his wife, Lisa (Debra Messing), run off with a French man (Hank Azaria) on their honeymoon, and then sadly returns to New York City, where he works at an insurance company. Ruben is behind his company's flawless risk-analysis software, but he also uses it to manage his life, so he's a bit gun-shy when he meets a new woman, Polly Prince (Jennifer Aniston).



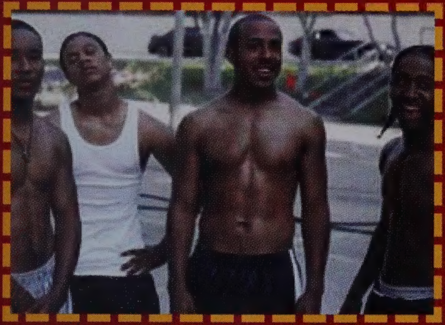
TORQUE RELEASE 1/16/04

Biker Cary Ford (Martin Henderson) returns to town to reunite with his girlfriend, Shane (Monet Mazur). Henry (Matt Schulze), leader of the Hellions gang, is after Cary because he stole some bikes that had drugs stored in the gas tanks. Henry frames Cary for the murder of Junior, the younger brother of Trey (Ice Cube), who heads up another gang, the Reapers.



THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

RELEASE 1/23/04 Ashton Kutcher stars as an emotionally conflicted man dealing with suppressed childhood memories. Cleverly enough, he discovers a way to travel back in time, but his different actions in the past have enormous ramifications for his future/present. And every time he heads back in time to fix the problems he's created, things invariably get worse.



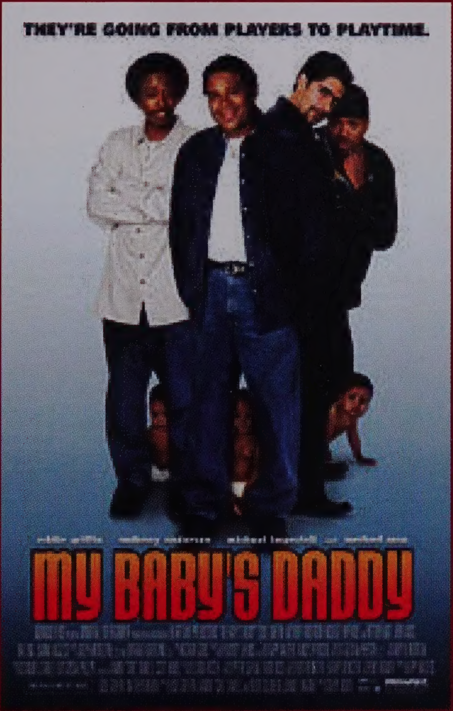
YOU GOT SERVED

RELEASE 1/30/04 Set in the world of competitive hip-hop street dancing, the story is about two friends, David (Omarion) and Elgin (Houston), who are the best duo in town. But their reputations and friendship end up on the line when they face serious competition and are challenged in the biggest event of the year.

BARBASHOP 2

RELEASE 1/30/04 Since the original Barbershop was a surprise hit, earning $75 million in the U.S. alone, MGM put plans for a sequel in motion. Expect more tales in Chicago's South Side, at the legendary barbershop run by Calvin Palmer (Ice Cube). Queen Latifah will play the owner of a nearby beauty salon.

ADVERTISMENT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Queer Eye: Jai Rodriguez

Hot Celeb Of The Month

It's recess at an exclusive boys school on glamorous Long Island. The other fourth graders are running and yelling and hurling dodge balls at one another. Where's little Jai Rodriguez? He's in the band room, alone, finalizing the choreography for his first one-man show, J.J.: Live at Lunch. Most of his classmates haven't yet exuded quite the same enthusiasm for the theatre, but Jai takes solace in knowing that someday all that lost recess time will pay off. (As he was heard to say, "Name for me ONE famous dodge-ball player, mmm-kay?") Now Jai is sharing his quest for culture and style with men the world over, at least those with TVs and access to basic cable.

Jai is a talented actor, singer and dancer who is currently starring in the lead role of Zanna in the off-Broadway musical hit Zanna, Don't! Jai joined the production after a long stint on Broadway as Angel in the Tony Award-winning musical Rent. Jai is also a fixture among the hip NYC social set, regularly performing his solo act in the newest and hottest nightspots. On Queer Eye, Jai uses all aspects of his professional training and skills as a performer plus his social charisma to coach straight subjects on everything from mixing 'n mingling in a social setting, to conversation skills, and to being at ease on the dance floor.

Cast Members Of Queer Eye For The Straight Guy.
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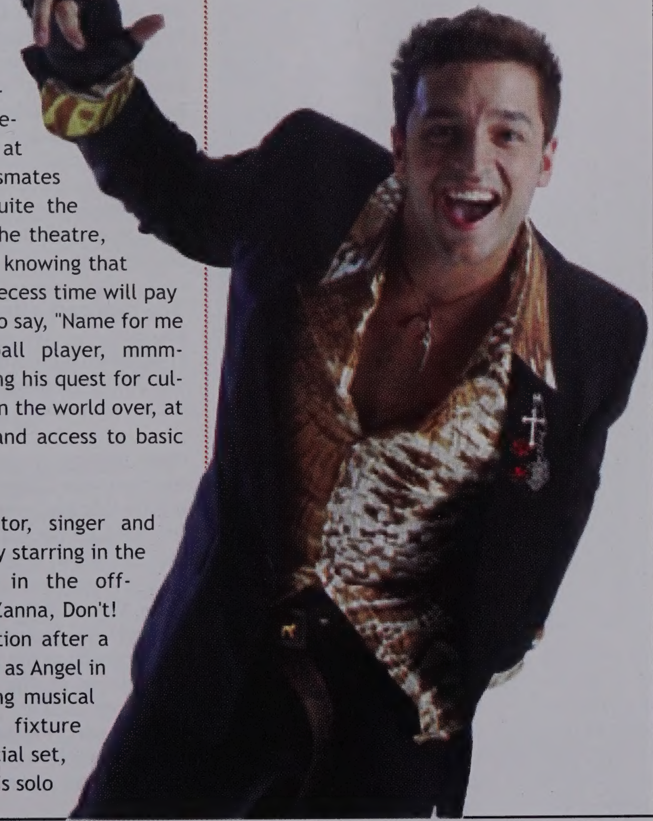

DISCOVERING THE TECHNOLOGICAL Advancement of Dating

I have taken the stance that I am going to be more proactive and assertive in regards to my dating life. After a 3-year hiatus, I have returned to corporate America and my schedule does not sometimes allow for an active social life therefore, I have to take advantage of all the avenues available to me. I decided to utilize an online dating service. Initially I thought about what people and my friends might say, but in the end technology won the battle over my ego.

The way that people communicate online is very interesting to me. For example, there was the guy from Dallas, TX that responded to my ad and within the first two paragraphs professed that he would like for us to become "friends," that he wanted to move away from Dallas because of all the fake people and he needed to get me as soon as possible. I wasn't sure how to respond to this so in a roundabout way, I politely declined and wished him well in his search for love. Then there was the guy that responded to my ad like this:

"Sup man cool attractive thick bro checking you out.
Friendship/relationship orientated
Gainfully/professionally employed
Hit me up man."

Upon logging on and reading this, my first reaction was "delete." But then I thought maybe this was why I am single. Was I being too hard on people? Was I a snob? When I saw the word "orientated" instead of oriented and then "professional" but yet he did not know the difference between the two.... I immediately thought yuck! Then I looked at his approach to me the "sup man" and "hit me up man" and wondered what this was about. Nowhere in my profile did I remotely hint that I use this kind of hyper-masculine, pseudo-straight man vernacular. So, why did this brother approach me like this? After some contemplation on my part, I knew why. It was because of the "DL" fad that has swept the country. Most of these people have attached themselves to this identity because they don't know who they are as men (let alone gay men) and rather than be a man of their own convictions they find it easier to conform to what is popular. In two words, it's called "peer pressure." But my dilemma was not; does this man fit into this category? My dilemma was should I respond and take the time to find out?

Way too often do we dismiss potentially good mates because of our own hang-ups that we need to get over. So, I decided that I would pose the question to my friends and let them decide whether or not I should respond. The majority of my friends agreed that I was being way too hard on this man. Most of them cited that people make careless and harmless mistakes when emailing and I should not allow that to be the deciding factor for the kind of person he is. I agreed with them. There was however one of my friends that agreed with my initial reaction. He quoted Maya Angelou saying, "When a person shows you or tells you who they are, believe them the first time." I agreed with him too. Somewhere in between both of these opinions was a balance.

The balance for me was to respond to his email and try to create a dialogue. I made a conscious effort to ask questions that would allow me to try to get to know the person. I asked questions like how old was he, where was he from, what he like to do for fun.... you know the same questions that are asked when you meet someone in everyday normal situations. I think that I asked a total of four questions and I put an "etc." on the end that I thought would indicate to him to elaborate on anything else he deemed appropriate. I asked four questions and four answers were what I got. Clearly he did not get it. At this point I was at my wits end and clicked "delete."

With all of the technological advancements like, blackberries, cell phones, and two-ways, online dating is just another way to keep us connected. I thought (and still think) that online dating would be another avenue to open myself up to meeting new people that I may want to date. The thing that I never considered is that while technology is constantly evolving and advancing... people remain the same.

Scott A. Bogan
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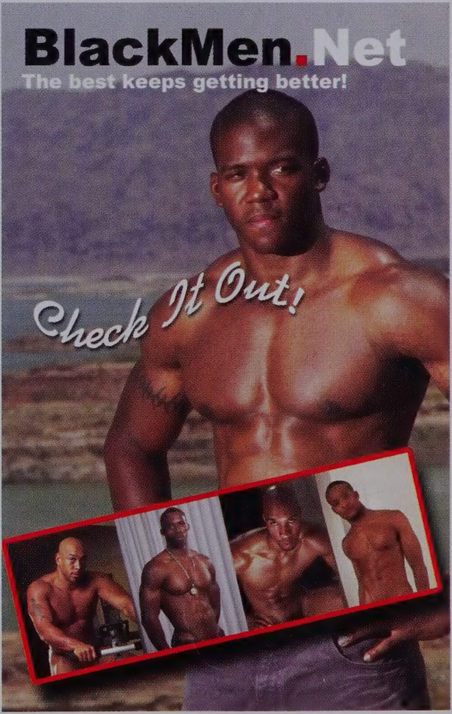
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Getting Into The Art Of Tattooing

Maybe your lover thinks tattoos are hot. Maybe you're an activist with a message for everyone to see. Maybe it's simply a Popeye fetish. Either way, getting a tattoo can be a big decision, and there are several things to consider before going under the needle.

What Is It?

Tattooing is a tradition of puncturing the skin and placing dye underneath it to create images or words made of ink. It started around 4000 B.C. in Ancient Egypt, and has since spread throughout the globe, taking on a myriad of meanings. The Burmese in 2000 B.C. incorporated tattooing into their magic. The Greeks used special tattoos for their spies. King Harold of Great Britain, in an everlasting romantic gesture, tattooed "Edith" above his heart. But before you rush out to emblazon your beloved's name on your backside, keep in mind that this procedure is a permanent one, and even with today's technology, removing it may not be as simple as you think.

Luckily, there is another option: The temporary tattoo. Applied to the top of your skin, instead of being injected underneath, the dye lasts anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks.

Henna, a popular type of temporary tattoo, is a small shrub found in the Middle East. First used around 5000 B.C. for its natural healing properties, Henna has since been a popular body decoration in many cultures. A tattoo artist creates a Henna paste, which he or she then paints onto your skin. Depending on the skill of the artist, designs can be extremely intricate and beautiful. The application is painless, and the paste dries soon thereafter, leaving a brownish-red hued tattoo that lasts for up to twelve days before fading.

The other option for a temporary fix is the store-bought tattoo. Choose a ready-made design, press it against your skin and rub a little water on top. Voila! All it takes to remove this type of tattoo is a few good scrubbings.

How is it done?

If you're in the market for a permanent tattoo, head to your neighborhood tattoo parlor. The tattoo artist will point out many designs to choose from. And when you're ready, he or she will use a needle to inject dye underneath your skin.

If your mind's not made up, try a Henna or store-bought tattoo, both of which are temporary. Henna, a small shrub found in the Middle East, is made into a paste that is painted onto your skin. It dries into a brownish-red hue that lasts for about twelve days before fading. You can go to a Henna artist, or buy a kit and try your own designs! If Henna's not your thing, take a look at the store-bought kind. They come with a ready-made designs that you place onto your skin and wet. This tattoo lasts for a few days, and a few good scrubbings will usually remove it.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 62

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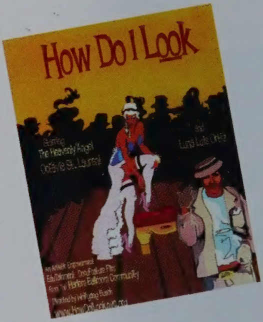
BY DWIGHT POWELL

Picking Put Where "Paris Is Purning" Left Of Comes

HOW DO I LOOK


How Do I Look
Starring The Heavenly Angel Octavia St. Laurent

"Paris Is Burning," a groundbreaking documentary produced by Jenny Livingston In 1990, introduced the world to the gay-subculture, known as the "Ballroom" community that had been transcending the nights of Harlem for years. Now almost 14 years later, the world will again become reacquainted with the Xtravaganzas, Ninjas, Pendavis', Xaviers and all of the other "children" in "HOW DO I LOOK."

"HOW DO I LOOK" is an EduTainment / DocuFeature film about the ballroom scene which has progressed greatly from 1990's "Paris Is Burning." The film, directed by long-time supporter of the ballroom community, Wolfgang Busch, features interviews with several legendary House members from across the country discussing everything from the effect of AIDS within the community, to the transgender movement, to the evolution of vogueing.

This time however, the ballroom community is much more involved in the final outcome of the project. This film is intent on differentiating itself from "Paris" by emphasizing the fact that many voguers have jobs, educational goals, and healthy relationships with their biological families. "My 'children' work, go to school and come to the balls for fun," said producer Kevin Ultra Omni. "The other film didn't talk about that." Also, unlike "Paris," proceeds from the royalties will be shared with the ballroom community and LGBT community- based organizations.

Director Wolfgang Busch promises that the film will include some prime runway performances. "Paris" veterans David Ultima and Octavia St. Laurent will strut their stuff once again, alongside Legendary Newcomers such as Mohammad Omni and Andre Givenchy (Formally André Mizrahi, Clikque December 2000 Cover Model).

"How Do I Look," speaks powerfully about the passing on of three generations of Harlem "Ballroom" traditions and family values from legends such as Dorian Corey, Avis Pendavis, Anji Xtravaganza, Marcel Christian, Eriq Christian Bazaar, Ross Infiniti, Tracy Africa, David Ultima, Alvernian

BY DWIGHT POWELL

Style, Grace & Face

Prestige, Jose Xtravaganza, Andre Givenchy, Willi Ninja, Jamal Balenciaga, Mystery Dior, Stanley Angel, Harmonica Sunbeam, Emanuel Xavier, Rickey Revlon, Selvyn Givenchy, Jack Givenchy, MASHALA, Anthony Revlon, Gerard Gaskin, Roxy Latex and China Blue Latex.

It presents a potent real life representation of the strong bonds and lives of the "families" and personalities within the "ballroom community." The sense of family values is addressed by Octavia's father Billy Austin, Kevin Omni, Shawn Eminence, Monica Continental and lesbian Jaimee Balenciaga. We come to understand the personal struggles of the late Pepper Labeija, the founder of the first original House, as we have come to know them today, the House of Labeija and Luna Luis Ortiz Khan. And Carmen Xtravaganza, Octavia St. Laurent, Angie Infiniti and Jazmine Givenchy open a whole new world to us through Transgender education. Additionally, Junior Labeija and R.R Chanel and Jose Xtravaganza detail the very shocking reality of substance abuse, in the community.

All combined these stories show the true nature of real people struggling to find acceptance and happiness in an often unfriendly world; and chronicles their efforts to raise their self-esteem through competition at events they call "Balls," to build recognition and ballroom status with the goal to become "Legendary" and to one day leave behind a legacy.

Along with the feature film (which is now in previews) the producers and promoters are offering a wide variety of "How Do I Look" items including a CD soundtrack, picture book and other merchandising are expected to generate royalties to empower members of the Ballroom community.

Donations in support of this project are greatly needed. In return we offer you credit at the end of the documentary.

For more information on how you can help visit
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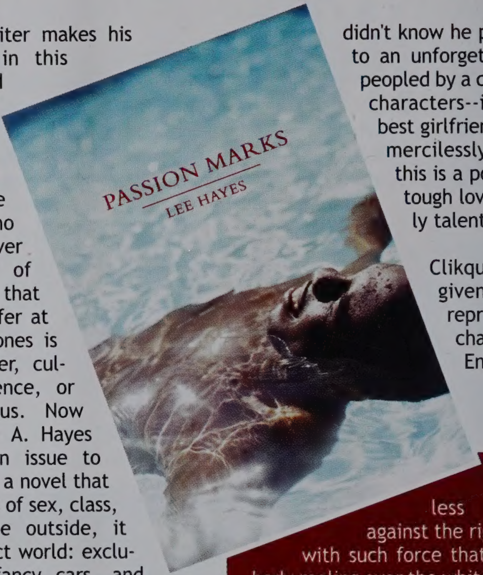
Passion Marks

A NOVEL BY LEE HAYES

A gifted young writer makes his literary debut in this haunting and powerful novel about a gay black man grappling with the death of his twin brother--and with the dream boyfriend who turns out to be the lover from hell. Victims of domestic abuse know that the violence they suffer at the hands of loved ones is not limited by gender, culture, sexual preference, or socio-economic status. Now first-time author Lee A. Hayes takes this hot-button issue to gripping new levels in a novel that transcends all barriers of sex, class, and race. "From the outside, it looked like the perfect world: exclusive neighborhood, fancy cars, and wealth. If only they knew..." Set in Texas, Passion Marks tells the story of Kevin Davis, an attractive, college-educated black man who is leading an agonizing double life. The fashionable Houston home Kevin shares with his partner might as well have bars on the windows, for all the freedom he enjoys. For behind closed doors, he lives a sordid and humiliating existence as the kept lover of powerful businessman James Lancaster, a vicious closet abuser. Compounding Kevin's torment is the guilt he harbors over the recent death of his identical twin brother, Keevan. Haunted by apocalyptic visions and terrified of the man he'd once hoped could save him, Kevin is unable to break the cycle of violence and depravity that has made him a prisoner in his own life--until an unforeseen event forces him to confront the demons that are holding him back and call on a strength he didn't know he possessed. Building to an unforgettable climax, and peopled by a cast of richly drawn characters--including Kevin's best girlfriend, Danea, and the mercilessly driven James--this is a powerhouse story of tough love from a supremely talented new author.



Clikque Magazine was given approval to reprint the entire first chapter of the novel. Enjoy!

The black cordless phone slammed against the right side of my face with such force that it sent my entire body reeling over the white sofa. I rolled over it and onto the coffee table, shattering the glass top. Instantly, my face went numb. I lay on the floor in a daze, trying to ascertain the extent of the damage: the pain was intense. I rubbed my face with my hands while I tried to ignore the warm feel of blood as it oozed out of my back and soaked my shirt. When I found the strength, I looked above me and saw him looming like a volcano suddenly compelled to erupt. His savagely contorted face burned with the fire of his words and the anger that dripped from his thick breath. When I attempted to sit up, I felt his shoe in my chest, kicking me back to the carpet. His words failed to convey any meaning through the depth of my pain, but the anger on his face spoke volumes. I closed my eyes, praying this nightmare would end; instead of ending, his body suddenly pressed down on my chest, and unrelenting fists pounded my face. I tried to shield my face from his blows with my arms, even while his frame weighed heavily upon me.

By this time, my lungs were on the verge of collapse and I gasped desperately for air. I was far too weak to force him off me, and when I struck him in the eye with my fist, it only made him pound harder. Through his anger, and between the unbroken chains of profanity, he yelled something about blood on the carpet, as if it was my fault, and then pulled me up from where I lay like a rag doll. He stood me up so I could look directly in his brown eyes, and then he slapped me so hard across the face that I crashed into the wall, narrowly escaping the flames of the fireplace. Just as he raced toward me, I stood up, and with all the force I could muster, I slammed my fist into his face. He stumbled. I threw my body into him with the force of a linebacker. He tried to withstand the force, but he lost his balance, and we both tumbled onto the floor. His head hit the side of the entertainment center, and blood began to run down his face from the open wound. I pounded his face with my fist, and then slammed his head onto the floor repeatedly like a man possessed. He looked worn out. It was over.

I rolled off him and onto my back, taking a moment to breathe as I looked up at the ceiling. Slowly, I moved away from him. That's when I felt his fist connect with the back of my head. He plowed into me like a truck from behind, and I flew into the fifty-gallon aquarium, shattering the glass and sending the helpless fish to the floor. They flipped and flopped, gasping for air; within moments they'd be dead. He grabbed my left leg and pulled me with ease across the carpet, unmoved by my struggle for freedom. My attempt at liberation from his massive hands proved futile, and he continued dragging me across the white carpet, leaving behind a trail the color red.

When we reached the staircase, he gave my body a tremendous yank to assert his control. With sudden prowess, he moved behind me, pushed my body down, and forced my stomach into the stairs. I could feel his gigantic hands on the back of my neck as he pressed my face into the carpet. I was pinned down, unable to move. He ripped off my blood-stained shirt and tossed it aside. As he whispered something in my ear, his hands grabbed my ass. The heat of his breath scalding my neck was far worse than the words he spoke. He grabbed me by the waist and raised my body up just enough for him to undo my belt. As he pulled down my pants and underwear in one swift motion, I braced myself. His accelerated breathing became louder and louder in anticipation. I tried to prepare myself for the violation. I knew that he would do everything in his power to make it hurt—to make me scream for mercy. He had a special affinity for delivering pain. This time I would deny him the perverse pleasure of hearing me scream.

Behind me, I heard him unzip his pants; that was the catalyst that brought tears to my eyes. I would not let them fall. My tears would only add to his callous joy, so I withheld them. My legs were then forced apart, and I knew there was no turning back. With his arm still pressed against the back of my neck, and my face forcibly held against the floor, I felt his thick flesh force its way into me, connecting in a vile union. The pain of that first thrust when it broke through my barrier almost caused me to let out a loud scream, but I held it in. His bursts rocked my body, and the pain increased the longer he stayed in me. I reached my hands behind my back and tried to push him off me, but my effort proved pointless. He pushed harder and harder, while his inhuman grunts filled the room, like the howl of a wolf in the darkness of night. The force of his thrusts rolled my body back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, for what seemed like an endless moment in time. My face dug deeper into the stair, and the burn from the carpet on my face was becoming painful. His panting was vicious, much like an animal that suddenly realized the extent of its power and its victory. All the while, his voice shouted despicable words, and with each debilitating push from his body into mine, his voice became louder. This had to end. All of the hurt my body suffered now went to my head, and I could feel myself losing consciousness. He turned my head toward him, forcing me to look into his hollow eyes. Blood stained his face. His muscles inside of me began to contract, and I knew it would be over soon. He pushed harder, faster, harder, and still faster, until I felt the release of his hot fluids. He pulled out of my body while still enjoying his

CAPTER 1 CONTINUES ON PAGE 56

CHAPTER 1 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

eruption. His juices spilled on my back, and then rolled down my side. It was over. From behind, he wrapped his hands around my waist and pulled me into his powerful chest. He held me there for a few seconds, gently kissed the back of my neck, and released me. "Clean up this mess," he said as he motioned toward the war-torn room. He climbed over me, and made his way up the staircase. When I looked up, I saw the back of his naked body reach the top of the stairs and disappear into darkness.

There were no words with enough power to capture the way I felt. I remained laying face down in the carpet, naked except for one sock dangling off my foot, unwilling—perhaps unable—to move. I felt stinging sensations pulsating on my back from the glass still buried beneath my skin. I tried to check my back to see if it had stopped bleeding, but I really wasn't concerned about those cuts; my attention was singularly focused on bigger issues. My entire body, wrapped in a throbbing blanket of pain, felt limp. After a few deep breaths, I managed to regain some control of my tattered frame, and forced myself to slide slowly to the bottom of the staircase, where I pulled my knees into my chest, and rested in the corner like a small child hiding from monsters under the bed. The sweet smell of jasmine still clung in the air, much like a damp mist over a lake in the early morning. With my right hand, I caressed my face--the swelling had already begun. I needed to crawl into the kitchen to get some ice, but that distance seemed unconquerable. The dimly lit house, once full of noise, now sat quiet as if the weakened sky had nothing left to give after its storm. The only audible sounds came from the rain lightly pounding against the windows, and the murmur of the rolling thunder. The lightning flashes offered a brief illumination, but I longed for the darkness to bury my shame.

The entire evening replayed in my head like a big-screen horror movie. I paid close attention to the details to see if I could figure out where it went wrong. Alluring candles, sweet incense, and a basket full of fabulous seafood in front of the fireplace. Sexy love ballads from the stereo, expensive wine, and vases full of freshly cut colorful roses all over the house. It all seemed so perfect. James and I had held each other closely while staring seductively in each other's eyes; this was the man that I adored. The evening conversation had been full of love and comforting smiles. His soothing caresses had brought me to the ultimate state of relaxation. I thought the dark days were long behind us, forever sealed by the hands of time. For the first time in months, it seemed that we could be the happy couple I envisioned.

This wasn't the first time I had felt his fists and been burned by his quick temper. Throughout the course of our relationship, violence was not uncommon, especially during his times of stress related to his firm, Lancaster Computer Systems. A year ago LCS made an acquisition of a smaller computer firm in Austin; this transaction brought out the worst in James. Some nights when he came home, I feared for my safety, and at times, for my life, not knowing what to expect when he walked through the door. It was like rolling the dice.

Partly, it was my fault. I knew this. Sometimes, maybe out of boredom, I would intentionally antagonize him just to get a reaction. I wanted to see how far I could push him. I wanted to know whether or not I had the power to make him lose control. During stressful times, instead of being supportive and appreciative, I managed to say or do the wrong thing. But this attack was by far one of the most vicious outbursts I'd suffered at his hands.

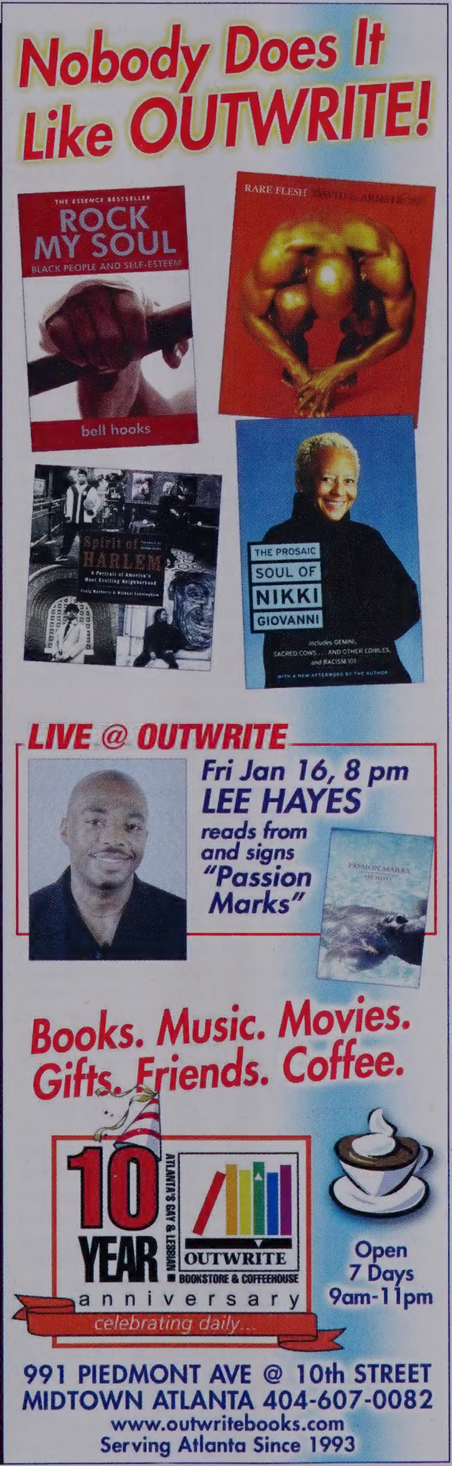
Over and over again, I replayed the evening. The phone rang and he picked up. While he was on the phone, I decided to go into the kitchen for more wine, and when I returned something in him had changed. He seemed irritable and ended the phone call by slamming the phone on its base. As I approached him, the phone rang again. I answered it without thinking. By the time I heard his commands to let it ring, it was too late. I should have noticed the look on his face. I should have heard his words. I should not have let anything interrupt the mood. He stood up and held his hand out for the phone, and I innocently gave it to him. That's when everything changed. It was my fault. If only I hadn't answered that call. If only I had listened to him. I would have to start paying more attention to his needs. The phone call could have waited.

As I dragged myself up from the corner with considerable effort, I wondered how many men and women were in situations similar to mine. The lyrics to that old song "How Could You Hurt the One You Love?" came to mind. I managed to limp slowly to the restroom without losing my balance. I held a firm grip on the black sink for support, and when I flipped the light switch on, I let out a shriek as I looked at the broken and tattered image that stood before me in the mirror. Surely, this wasn't me. The mirror played a cruel joke. My eyes were beginning to close from the swelling, and bloodstains covered my face. My swollen lips pulsated with a heavy pain. Numerous purple and black bruises covered my chest, and the gentlest touch of my passion marks caused a horrible sensation. Still holding onto the sink, I turned to examine my back in the mirror, but when I turned, a sudden explosion of pain enveloped my body. The room started to spin, and before I even realized what was happening, I collapsed to the floor in a fit of pain. The plush mauve rug did little to break my fall. I heard the sound and felt the thump as my head hit the porcelain tub, and everything went black.

"Sometimes, Kevin, you reap what you sow." I was startled by the familiar voice and when I opened my eyes the apparition stood before me, part flesh and part fantasy, and then vanished into the darkness.

"Keevan? Where are you?" I asked in fright. My heart palpitated with the rapid speed of hummingbird wings and it felt as if it would beat through my chest.

"I came back." I followed the voice into the den. Keevan stood there, dressed in the same clothing he wore when I found him dead. I walked slowly toward him, with carefully chosen steps. "I'm your brother. I came back." His words haunted me and his expressions taunted me while his eyes mocked, offering no absolution. He vanished in the same mystery that allowed him to come forth.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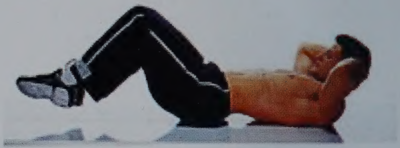
If you could take only one abdominal workout with you to a desert island, this should be it. And for three very good reasons: First, it's exceedingly thorough–it works the lower, middle and upper abdominals as well as the intercostals and the obliques. Second, it's done via a "giant set" format, in which you do a fairly low number of repetitions per exercise, but you take no rest between the exercises, a method that allows you to do more work before you get tired. And third, the workout is designed to expand as your midsection muscles improve and require greater resistance. So no matter how long you remain stuck on that infernal desert island, you'll never outgrow it (the workout, that is).

Created by our staff experts, the abdominal giant set encompasses five different exercises, each aimed to hit a different area of the midsection. When you first try the giant set, do eight reps of each exercise. Since one of these (the side crunch) involves separate right-side and left-side movements, your total number of continuous reps for the giant set comes to 48–and that's a lot. Yet it's not nearly as difficult as doing 48 straight reps of any of the five individual exercises would be. The reason is simple: Each of the exercises initiates the muscle contraction from a different spot and angle, thereby evenly distributing the workload. (Nevertheless, if you're a beginner, you may want to practice each of the five exercises individually, to get down the correct form, before you stack them together.)

After completing the five-exercise cycle, rest no more than a minute and a half. Then do another cycle, rest another minute and a half, and finish your workout with yet another five-exercise cycle. Perform the full workout twice during your first week on the program, then bump it up to three times beginning in Week Two for the remaining five weeks. Also, increase the number of reps per exercise by two each week, unless you hit a mini-plateau, in which case you can wait a week before upping your rep count.

REVERSE CRUNCH



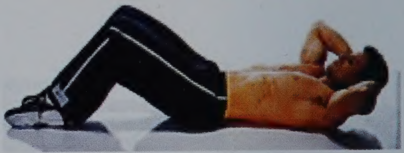
Start Position

Lie faceup on a floor mat—or in the sand if you're on a desert island. Raise your head and upper shoulders off the mat just slightly and lace the fingers of both hands together behind your head for support, keeping your elbows wide. Do not bend your head toward your chest; keep it perpendicular to your upper torso as much as possible. Bend your knees 90 degrees, and raise your feet an inch or two above the mat.

Movement

Lift your knees in a smooth arc toward your head while keeping the rest of your body as still as possible. When your knees are directly above your upper abdomen, pause briefly, contract the abs, then reverse direction and lower your feet slowly back toward the floor, but do not let them touch down. Maintain constant tension in your stomach muscles.

CRUNCH TWIST



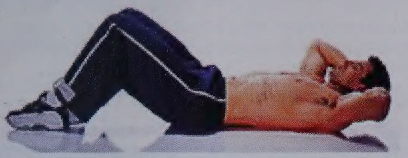
Start Position

Lie faceup on a floor mat—or in the sand if you're on a desert island. Raise your head and upper shoulders off the mat just slightly and lace the fingers of both hands together behind your head for support, keeping your elbows wide. Do not bend your head toward your chest; keep it perpendicular to your upper torso as much as possible. Bend your knees 90 degrees, and raise your feet an inch or two above the mat.

Movement

Contract your stomach muscles while at the same time twisting your torso to the left, so that your right elbow moves toward your left knee. Make sure to lift your left shoulder off the floor. Pause at the height of the movement, then return slowly to the starting position without allowing your working muscles to relax completely. Alternate between leftward and rightward twists for the recommended number of repetitions. (See introduction for rep counts.)

TRADITIONAL CRUNCH



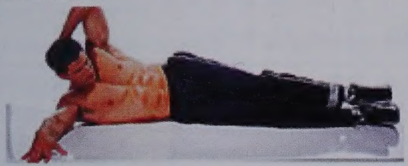
Start Position

Lie faceup on a floor mat—or in the sand if you're on a desert island. Raise your head and upper shoulders off the mat just slightly and lace the fingers of both hands together behind your head for support, keeping your elbows wide. Do not bend your head toward your chest; keep it perpendicular to your upper torso as much as possible. Bend your knees 90 degrees, and raise your feet an inch or two above the mat.

Movement

Contract your stomach muscles so that your upper torso curls toward your knees. Raise your shoulders off the floor, but keep your lower back flat against it. To avoid stressing your neck vertebrae, do not allow your hands to pull your head toward your chest. Keep your head fixed perpendicularly to your upper torso throughout the range of motion. When you reach full contraction, pause briefly and return to the starting position without letting your abdominal muscles relax completely.

Start Position

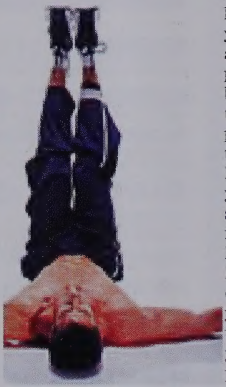


Lie on your right side with your legs straight and, for balance, extend your right arm along the floor at a right angle to your body. Cup your left hand behind your head, held a few inches above the floor, with your elbow pointing toward the ceiling. Throughout the movement, keep your head stationary; do not bend it or move it toward your feet.

Movement

While moving your upper torso toward your feet, contract the muscles on the left side of your torso so that your upper body curls in a smooth arc. At the same time, lift your legs upward (keeping the ankles together) as though you're trying to form a big "V." When your obliques are fully contracted, return slowly to the starting position. After doing the required number of reps for the left side of the body, reverse your position and do the same number of reps for the right side.

REVERSE TRUNK TWIST

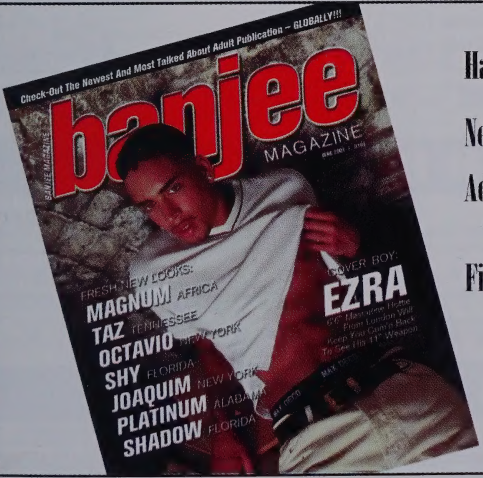


Start Position

Lie on your back with your arms extended along the floor for support, away from your body. Bend at the waist until your lower body is perpendicular to your upper torso. Bend your knees 90 degrees and lift your feet up until your shins are parallel to the floor.

Movement

Keeping your legs together and perpendicular to your upper torso, lower them toward the floor on your left side as far as possible. Keep your back flat on the ground. Resist gravity slightly to make the movement slow and controlled. When your feet are roughly two inches above the floor, gently reverse direction and return to the starting position. Repeat the motion to the opposite side. When your feet are back in the air again, that's one rep.



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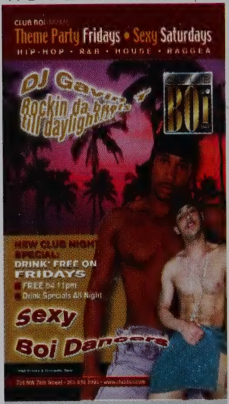
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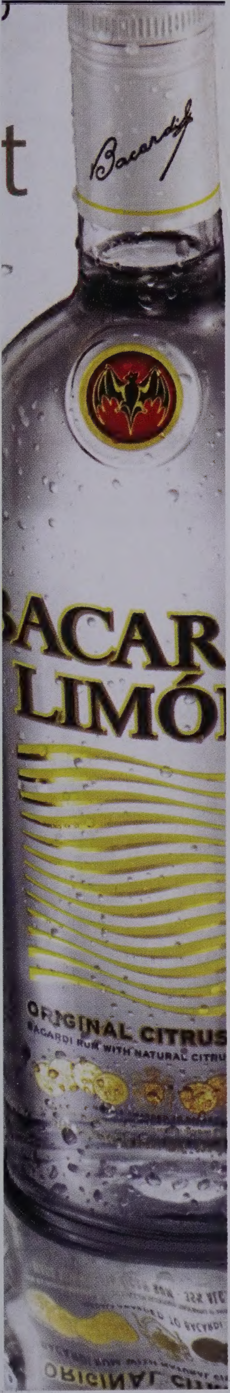

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

How much does it cost?

How much it costs depends on what you want to get. If you're looking for a cheap tattoo - and I mean cheap - scare up some change, hitch a ride to your local supermarket or mall and hit the vending machines. You're likely to find a tamely designed press-on temporary tattoo.

If you're hoping for Henna, be prepared to pay twenty dollars and up, depending on how large and detailed you'd like the design to be. If you're feeling artsy, you can find kits on the web for around 10 to 20 dollars. They usually include templates, an applicator tube, pre-mixed Henna paste and gloves.

For the real deal, el permanente, prepare to lay out at least 50 bucks for starters. Larger, more detailed or more colorful designs can run you into the hundreds, even thousands of dollars and can require multiple visits.

Important considerations

Temporary tattoos don't carry the health risks that permanent tattoos do, because the latter breaks through the skin, potentially exposing you to Hepatitis and HIV. And permanent tattoos hurt.

Luckily, there are guidelines that tattoo artists can follow to greatly reduce the chances of trouble. Ask them if they:

- wash their hands and wear latex gloves during the procedure
- use sterile, disposable needles that they open in front of their customers
- throw away ink caps, razors and stencils after every use
- use an autoclave (an intense heating process) to sterilize equipment, and have their autoclave inspected monthly
- sterilize the pigment bottles and the work area with bleach
- use an ultrasonic tank to rinse the tube and needle set from their tattoo machines

If you don't get a satisfactory response to these questions, or if you notice something disturbing, like a dirty work space, remember: you can walk away and find a better tattoo parlor.

One last thought about permanent tattoos: don't get one unless you want it forever. Yes, laser technology can help remove your tribute to "My Darling Peter" before it deflates your relationship with your new beau, Jay. But laser removal often requires multiple treatments, and the end result may only lighten your tattoo, or less often, leave you with an ugly scar.

Possible side effects

Pain and bleeding are common while you're getting your permanent tattoo, and scabbing is common afterward. For the first few days, use an antibiotic cream on your tattoo, and if it doesn't look infected, you can use cocoa butter for the remaining week or two until the scabbing subsides.

You may also experience an allergic reaction to the pigment dye. According to Jacob Baral, M.D., who practices tattoo removal in New York City, allergies include local swelling and itching. If you're concerned, ask your tattoo artist to test a tiny portion of your skin to see if there's a reaction before getting the tattoo. If you are allergic to a tattoo, the only way to stop the reaction is to have it removed!

Dangerous complications

The complications from an unsterile permanent tattoo procedure are almost unthinkable: you can contract HIV and Hepatitis B and C, among other bloodborne diseases. Transmission can occur if your tattoo artist injects you with a needle used on someone else. Hepatitis B can survive outside the body for days, increasing your chances of contracting it from a contaminated needle.

Luckily, transmission of disease through tattooing does not commonly occur.

How long is the healing process?

After you get a permanent tattoo, expect the healing process to take about two to three weeks. Bleeding is common during the procedure, and scabbing is common afterward. For the first few days, use an antibiotic cream on your tattoo, and if it doesn't look infected, you can use cocoa butter for the remaining week or two until the scabbing subsides.

The healing process for tatoo removal varies, depending on the tattoo.

How do you reverse it?

Laser surgery for tattoo removal often requires multiple treatments, depending on the colors in your tattoo. Visits are spaced about 10 days apart, during which time your doctor may use antibiotics and a special dressing over the treated area to help it heal.

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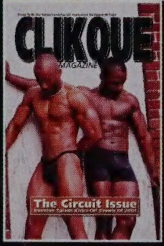
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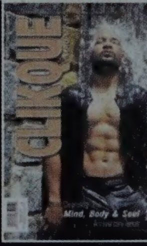
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Clikque
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MARCH 5

Talking A Stance On Our Issues

Welcome to the world of Clikque. We appreciate your encouragement and support. The response to our last edition was tremendous and we will continue to bring to you the latest and greatest of our community. With the current economy, Presidential elections coming, and the relentless attack on our human rights, civil rights, and rights as same gender loving people to enjoy the same benefits and rights as other Americans we must get involved. Clikque will stay in top of the tide of change and we will advocate for positive change.

African American women and SGL men continue to be infected with HIV in alarming rates, women's right to choose is being attacked, and the voting rights act (giving "Negroes" the right to vote) will have to be reauthorized. Do you realize that your right to vote is not guaranteed?! It can be taken away if the Congress does not reauthorize that act. The most basic right for Americans is not secure, for US, constitutionally.

As SGL people we still have to fight for our children, our homes, and respect within the community. We cannot sit back and let someone else decide for us what is important. We've got to get involved. Get involved in your local, state, regional, and national political movements. We cannot tell you what to believe or what to fight for, but we are encouraging you to stand up for something. "Stand Up and Represent."

Clikque will continue to be a source of information and encouragement. But don't let yourselves down. "Ain't gonna' let nobody turn us around." We cannot let anyone separate us, divide our power, or confuse the issues. Right now our fight is for the right to BE exactly who we are, as we are, because we are created right, natural, and normal. We have to stand for the rights of our Transgender brothers and sisters, our children, and our seniors. Every issue facing our nation is our issue. Don't be distracted by rhetoric.

Darryl LC Moch
Sr. Staff Writer

How do you want to live your life? Remember the days of shame and hiding. The times when we couldn't see any images of ourselves on tv or in the movies (while positive Black images are still lacking) we are moving in a better direction. Remember the fear of being fired because you were gay or lesbian? How about not being able to get hired because you were transgender? Remember the days of sex in parks and secret places and you were not even safe to love in the privacy of your own home?

It's really up to you. Your one vote does count. Your $ contribution to a campaign can help. You- volunteering and fighting for a cause you believe in is important. You are relevant. Clikque will continue to bring you the issues most relevant to our lives. *We encourage you to write us and tell us what's on your mind; support us, as we support you. Clikque is here for you.*

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FLORIDA COURTS OKs GAY ADOPTION BAN

Plaintiffs 'surprised by hostility' of federal appeals court ruling

After deliberating for almost a year, a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled unanimously Wednesday that the state of Florida can legally bar "practicing homosexuals" from adopting children.

Doug Houghton (center) and his 11-year-old son Oscar were represented by ACLU attorney Matt Coles (far right) in a case challenging Florida's ban on gay adoptions. The Atlanta-based 11th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the ban in a ruling this week. (Photo by Yesikka Vivancos/AP

In a case brought by three gay families, the Atlanta-based federal appeals court held that adoption is a privilege granted by a state, invalidating the plaintiffs' claims that their constitutional rights to equal protection and due process were violated.

"The state of Florida has made the determination that it is not in the best interests of its displaced children to be adopted by individuals who 'engage in current, voluntary homosexual activity' and we have found nothing in the Constitution that forbids this policy judgment," Judge Stanley Birch wrote in the panel's decision.

Birch was joined on the panel by Judge Edward Carnes of Alabama; both men were appointed to the 11th Circuit by President George H.W. Bush. A third judge on the panel, Proctor Hug, Jr., was appointed to the 9th Circuit Appeals Court in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter.

Officials with the American Civil Liberties Union, which represented the prospective gay parents, called the ruling "deeply disappointing."

"We think the court is wrong in believing that government can continue to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation after the Supreme Court's decision in Lawrence v. Texas last summer," Matt Coles, director of the ACLU's Lesbian & Gay Rights Project, said in a written statement.

"We think the court is wrong in thinking that the Constitution lets the government assume that sexual orientation has anything to do with good parenting," Coles said.

Officials with the state of Florida could not immediately be reached for comment on the case, known as Lofton v. Kearney, while conservative groups quickly lauded the decision.

"In this age of judicial activism, it is refreshing to see a court assume its proper role and allow the people to set family policy," Mathew Staver, president of Liberty Counsel, an Orlando-based group that filed a brief supporting the ban, told the Associated Press.

15 states debate marriage

Gay GOP group blames flurry of anti-gay measures on Bush's State of the Union address

In the aftermath of President Bush's State of the Union address, in which he strongly hinted at support of a constitutional amendment on gay marriage, 15 state legislatures around the country have begun debating sweeping bans on recognition of gay unions, while a smaller number of states are weighing pro-gay measures aimed at stopping the rush to amend.

A bill blocking state recognition of gay marriage and barring state workers from receiving partner benefits passed the Ohio Senate last week and is likely to be signed by the state's Republican governor. Meanwhile, legislators in Indiana and Arizona succeeded in blocking bills that sought to amend their state constitutions to ban same-sex marriage.

While the Ohio bill is intended to prevent the state from recognizing a gay marriage performed in another state, the bill strongly notes, "specific statutory benefits of marriage" are against the "strong public policy of the state."

State Sen. C.J. Prentiss (D-Cleveland), who voted against the measure, called the bill "the most draconian violation of many rights" and tried to add a bereavement amendment to the measure at the last minute that was eventually tabled.

"Since I believe that everyone is human, has a heart, can cry, I thought my colleagues would have said 'yes' to the bereavement bill and not expose their homophobic feelings, but I was wrong," Prentiss said.

The controversial measure, House Bill 272, dubbed the Defense of Marriage Act by supporters and the Denial of Benefits Act by opponents, has Ohio lead-

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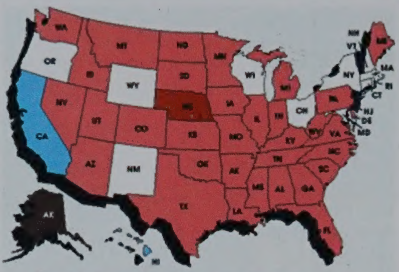


State of gay unions in the states

- ■ 2 states (VT, NJ) and DC recognize civil unions or domestic partnerships and don't have a DOMA law
- 🟦 2 states (CA, HI) offer limited legal recognition to gay couples. But California voters passed a 2000 initiative limiting marriage to heterosexual couples; Hawaii passed a state constitutional amendment limiting marriage to heterosexual couples
- ☐ 11 states have not passed any law concerning same-sex couples
- 🟥 33 States have passed DOMA laws restricting marriage to heterosexual couples and have no other laws addressing same-sex couples
- 🟥 1 state (NE) has passed a "Super DOMA," which bans domestic partner benefits to gay couples in addition to defining marriage for heterosexual couples only*
- ■ 1 state (AK) has passed a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage and offers no other form of recognition to gay couples

*Ohio is on the verge of passing a "Super DOMA" that would also restrict domestic partner benefits to state employees.

Sources: Human Rights Campaign and National Gay & Lesbian Task Force

ers divided.

Auditor Betty Montgomery, a moderate Republican who wants to be Ohio's next governor in 2006 supports the state's new measure while Attorney General Jim Petro, another Republican gubernatorial contender, opposes the bill calling it "a little too broad" adding that "binding unions" between gay couples should be afforded some protections.

"I don't think it should be against the strong public policy of the state to show respect and a little bit of tolerance for all people, and that may include people who make a strong commitment to one another and who happen to be of the same gender," Petro told the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Petro did not return Blade calls seeking comment.

Orest Holubec, a spokesperson for Republican Gov. Bob Taft, said the governor is prepared to sign the measure into law.

Prentiss noted that the private sector is expressing concern that one of the country's most far-reaching gay marriage bans could hurt their bottom line.

Patrick Guerriero, executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, strongly condemned the actions taken by the Ohio Legislature and again criticized Bush's State of the Union remarks in which the Republican president assailed "activist judges."

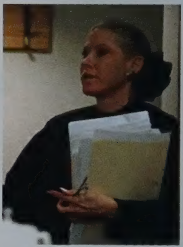
"I think more damaging than the exact wording, was the signal [the president's remarks] sent to legislators around the country," Guerriero said. "We knew that legislative leaders had been holding back from pushing forward with any legislation and sadly, within hours of the president's speech, we saw the most onerous of them pass the Ohio Senate.

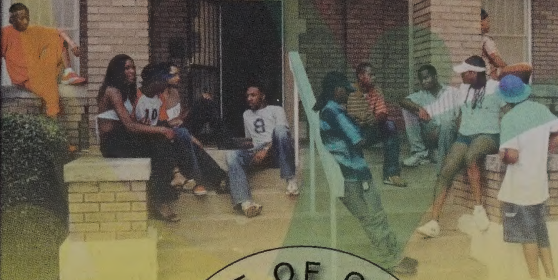
"We now have places like Ohio turning back the clock not just on gay marriage but on basic civil rights for gay and lesbian Americans."

When signed by Gov. Taft, Ohio will become the 38th state to pass some sort of DOMA measure.

Florida court says gay man ENTRAPPED BY GOOD-LOOKING DETECTIVE

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — A ruling that a detective was too good looking for a gay suspect to be charged in an undercover drug sting has been upheld by an appeals court. The Fourth District Court of Appeals agreed with Broward Circuit Judge Susan Lebow's decision that Julio Blanco thought the undercover officer might have been looking for a sexual relationship — not drugs — when he asked whether the defendant liked to "party." Blanco, 37, who described himself as a lonely gay man, said that he understood "party" to mean having a good time or being sexually involved. According to court records, Fort Lauderdale police Detective Mike Nahum, working with a Drug Enforcement Administration team, followed up with several requests for cocaine. Blanco refused three times and even tried to leave, but was ultimately convinced to stay and later bought some methamphetamines from the officer. The appeals court agreed that Blanco had been entrapped by "non-verbal communication used" by the undercover agent.





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BY DON SNEED

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Dwight Powell
Editor-In-Chief

They Are Out To Take Our Black Babies!

The first wave of primaries, for the national elections being held this year, have passed and the "pretenders to the throne" (Presidency) are falling quicker than the Dow Jones was a few years ago. Apparently, the Democrats are down to a two horse race at the time of this article: Ted Kennedy's protege - Senator John Kerry and the multimillionaire Barrister from North Carolina - Senator John Edwards. A lot of Democrats have been seen; recently, dancing in the streets and salivating at the chops with the hope that Mr. Kennedy's protege will be able to "beat Bush." Rumor has it that Black folks, all across America, are storming various sheet music stores and bushing up on that old Democratic Anthem: "Happy Days Are Here Again." For those of us at "ground zero" (Black Gay, bisexual, MSM and transgender males) of America's burgeoning AIDS crisis this election is of grave importance. Due to the unrelenting refusal of Black Gay men, etc., and Black people period, to cough up their private dollars to support their local organizations in this never ending battle against the AIDS virus, we (Black AIDS Service Organizations) have been left at the mercy of government funds and the million and one strings attached to such monies. Brothers and sisters, it's an old golden rule in a capitalist nation: "he who has the gold rules." When it comes to dollars to fight AIDS, we might be dancing to the music but we are not members of the band playing the song.

When our people finish their premature rejoicing over Mr. Kennedy's protege winning the Democratic primaries, it might be wise to listen to who is talking about stemming the AIDS crisis among Black people (never forget: Black Gay men, etc., are at "ground zero" - which means our dead bodies continue to stack up like so much cord wood). The only political White folks I've heard recently talking about AIDS and Black folks are Mr. Bush and the Republicans. It seems that when it comes to Gay people the number one concern of the Democrats is legalizing White Gays and Lesbians getting married. Point of fact is: White Gays and Lesbians seem that they couldn't care less about Black folks and AIDS, especially us brothers here at "ground zero" of the epidemic. Their number one political agenda is for them to get their marriages legalized.

My Black Gay and Lesbian brothers and sisters, let us not kid ourselves. There is a world of difference between Black and White Gay and Lesbian America. They are not one and the same and when anything concerning Gays and Lesbians is discussed in the national, statewide or local media, 99.9% of the time, it is White folks doing the talking. There is no social, political or economic reciprocity by White Gay America to any part of Black America, especially, Black Gays and Lesbians. For years we have gone and spent our hard earned dollars in the White Gay Communities all across America yet they never return the favor by spending their dollars in our communities unless they are copping some trade or dope. These are the facts, as unpleasant as they may be; the truth is the truth. One of the reasons that Clikque Magazine has had such a hard time staying afloat is the lack of social, political and economic reciproci-

Mr. Don Sneed is a senior staff writer fo Cliqkue Magazine. As Agency Director of Renaissance III in Dallas, Texas, Mr. Sneed has been a pillar in our community fighting the spread of HIV and AIDS. In January of 2003 Mr. Sneed was sworn in by Claude Allen, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, to serve a four-year term on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA).

BY DON SNEED

ty on the part of White Gay and Lesbian America. They won't even advertise in this magazine to the extent of the dollars that we spend with them on a regular basis warrants. That is why in most every city, throughout America, the White Gay clubs still have a "Black Folks Night."

It was recently said to me, by some White Gay men, that when it comes to the Democratic Party, Black people's votes don't matter anymore because White Gays and Lesbians can out vote us any day of the week. It appears that the real {our beloved and paid for in blood, toil, sweat and tears} civil rights movement has been co-opted by the White Gay and Lesbian community and their becoming legally married is at the top of their social, political and economic civil rights agenda. What about us Black Brothers, Sisters and Children infected with and dying from AIDS and all of the other hellish social, economic and political ills that affects us? As usual, when it comes to us Black Gays, Lesbians, etc., we're left to fend for ourselves until the next "Black Folks Night" at the White Gay Club. My viewpoint, regarding Gays and Lesbians, of any ethnicity, getting married is this: "Marriage should remain within the restrictions constructed by God; only a man and a woman can procreate (make babies). Artificial insemination of Lesbians does not fall within that parameter. Please understand that the adoptions, that will ensue following the legalization of marriage for White Gays and Lesbians, will be Black children. Such a fate for our innocent Black children does not sit well with me nor should it with any Black person in this nation. Let us learn to take care of our own without having to turn our babies over to others for parenting, mentoring, guidance and whatever else they may be transformed into, under such circumstances. We don't need any more Michael Jackson(s) like the one in that mug shot.

The Rebuttal

Greetings Don,

I am always intrigued by your words of wisdom. Thank you for sharing your thoughts about the plight of our people, especially black gays and lesbians. I do not hear enough about our social and political strife in America. And I agree with you that white gays and lesbians are not necessarily on our side which is no different from their heterosexual counterparts. I have always told my superiors that we need to get money from our community to do any real work in the

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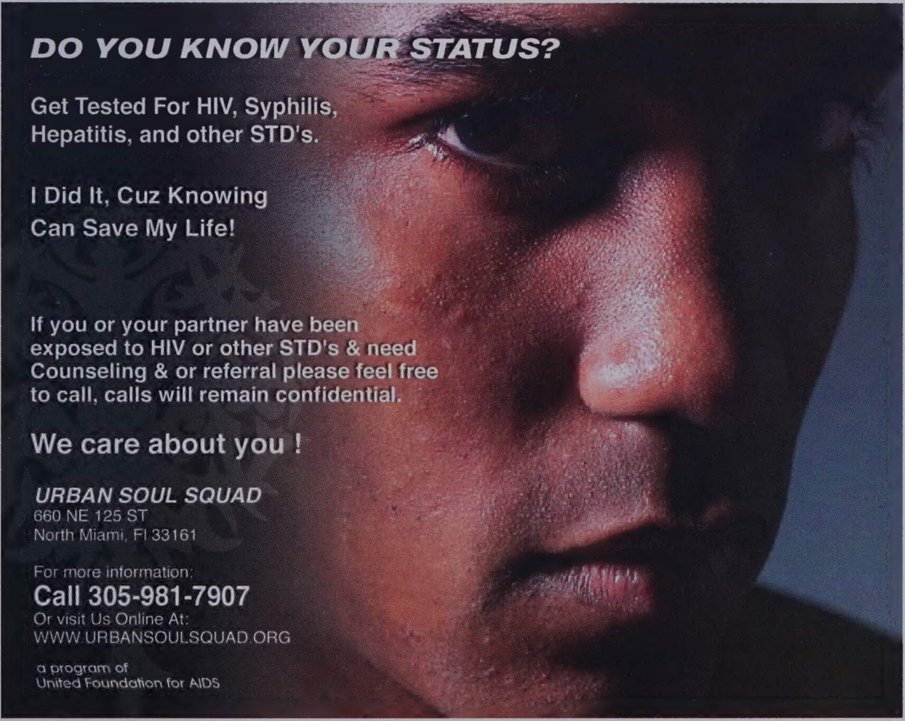
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HIV/AIDS EDITORIAL

By Lorenzo Herman

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

black community in fighting this virus. Last year, we lost several state funded programs because our organizations didn't know how to play the white man's game in the HIV business. That served as wake up call to my black community based organization.

In regards to the issue of legalizing gay marriage is another factor. I respect your spiritual path to a higher calling but I disagree that God constructed the restrictions to marriage between a man and woman. Most ancient societies needed a secure environment for the perpetuation of the species,a system of rules to handle the granting of property rights, and the protection of bloodlines. The institution of marriage handled these needs. For instance, ancient Hebrew law required a man to become the husband of a deceased brother's widow. Hebrew law had several definitions of what constituted a marriage which had a lot to do with the social order marked by considerable political and economic inequalities. Examples of these can be found in Exodus 22:16-17, Deuteronomy 22, Genesis 22 and 34, 1 Samuel 18, and 1 Kings 11 just to name a few. Monogamy was more of a reaction to social norms because most men could not afford to support more than one family in ancient Egypt and during the early Christian church.

Although most of us today would agree that marriage is consentual between two people who are in love was not always the tradition of the Christian church. Joseph Campbell, in the Power of Myth, mentions that the Twelfth century troubadours were the first ones who thought of courtly love in the same way we do now. The whole notion of romance apparently didn't exist until medieval times, and the troubadours. The statement of Pope Nicholas I in which he declared in 866, "If the consent be lacking in a marriage, all other celebrations, even should the union be consummated, are rendered void", shows the importance of a couple's consent to marriage. It has remained an important part of church teaching through the years.

Throughout human history, marriages were made for economic reasons and those unions were sometimes recognized in religious ceremonies. That concept has not really changed much at all. Heterosexual marriages has its economic privileges in this country and many other places. My brother and his wife were together for 7 years before they got legally married. They would have been content to remain "common law" married but their chosen union was economically infeasible for tax purposes and raising their sons, so they got legally married before God. When I was studying theology in my Catholic high school and university, the argument for silencing gays and treating them as invisible children of God, was because we cannot procreate. Marriage is for procreation, which comes from St. Augustine's philosophy that men and women should not enjoy sex because it is a vehicle for propagating the Earth. Even at the age of 16 when I read such materials by these revered theologians, I thought about the millions of men and women around the world who are either born sterile or cannot have children for other biological reason and they could not be married under the religious constraints of God. The argument still does not make any sense to me at the age of 30. God gave us of the power of reason and to use our brains. Some things that I hear from the pulpit just don't make any intellectual or common sense and the procreation argument to justify treating gays and lesbian like lepers and shut us out of economic equality is another one.

I don't know too much about the other cities adoption policies. But in San Diego county, black children make up 80% of children in the foster care system. Most of them never get adopted because there are not enough black families in the foster care system and black children are not desired by white folks. So the idea that white gays and lesbians will use legal marriage to take our black children away from us, don't add up here in San Diego county. That is highly unlikely to happen. Maybe in Texas but I don't know about Texas.

Respectfully yours,

Lorenzo Herman

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By SUSAN BELL, MD

Doctor's File (Questions for her)

I have been celibate going on four years. This is something I choose for myself personally. I masturbate very often to compensate for it. My friends and family are amazed with my decision. I have decided to hold off on sex until I can find that special someone who shares both my values and morals. I think about it a lot and even more when my period is approaching. I love sex as much as the next girl. Yet I have never achieved an orgasm with anyone except with myself. My question to you is: When I find a partner that I want to become sexually involved with, do you think the constant masturbation will subside? Will they please me as fully as I do myself? Overall, are there any side effects to long-term masturbation?

It seems to me that finding a partner is finding someone to whom you are emotionally, physically, and sexually attracted. Of course you are going to know your own body best, but people are different and your future partner may be able to show you some things that might enhance your sexual enjoyment. And of course there is the incalculable benefit of being with someone who turns you on. That alone can leave any masturbatory sexual gratification in the dust. On the other hand, maybe your partner will be inexperienced and you will have to guide how things go. You may likely also continue to masturbate once you have a partner. All are possibilities. It's finding the right partner that is the hard part.

I was making out with a girl I met in a club a few months ago, and the next day I had a cold sore on the inside of my lower lip. I was wondering if getting cold sores after making out with someone is an indication that that person has herpes and either does not know it or did not say so.

Herpes takes five to seven days after exposure to develop a sore, so it isn't the girl in the club last night who gave it to you. It could have been the girl in the club the prior week. You may have already had herpes and just not known it (and could have given it to the girl in the club). Fully 80% of people with herpes simplex do not know that they have it. Some don't realize that "fever blisters" or "sun blisters" are, in fact, herpes. A blood test for the presence of herpes antibody will tell you. If you have antibodies to HSV I (herpes simplex virus I) you will have fewer recurrences than if you have HSV II. Many people have more outbreaks when they are young, and the frequency tapers off as they get older. Many HSV carriers have no symptoms, which is what makes it so easy to transmit. Just make sure to avoid intimate contact when you have an outbreak; this is when the virus is most infectious. If you do have frequent outbreaks, you can take suppressive medication which will help reduce their frequency, severity, and duration.

I recently had an endocervical polyp removed and wanted to know if using older rubber-jelly-based sex toys will affect any polyp regrowth.

The answer is no. Endocervical polyps are spontaneous and are not influenced by anything that we know of in terms of their occurrence. It is easy to remove one incompletely, however. In this case they may recur or persist, but it isn't related to the sex toys. Make sure you clean your sex toys adequately as they can transmit lots of other things if they aren't taken care of.

I know you probably don't have a real answer for this, but I thought I would try. My girlfriend and I have been together for six months now and we have a good sex life, but there is one thing missing: She won't eat me out. She is disgusted by the idea. I have tried talking to her about it to reassure her it is not that bad, but it didn't work. She is not new to the idea, though, because she has done it to a few other people, but she said that they forced her to do it. I love her, so I don't want to put her through that again. But I really want her to. Is there any thing I can do to make her more comfortable with the idea?

That is such a gross expression, "eat me out." Yikes! Maybe if you refer to it in a different way, your girlfriend won't be disgusted by the idea.

Doctor's File (Questions for him)

I am a man and I masturbate once per day. Is this harmful? Thanks in advance.

There is no harm in masturbating once a day. It is perfectly healthy. Masturbation is good for your prostate and it can prevent painful prostate blockage. In addition, it can help relieve stress. Enjoy.

How can I hide my hickey?
My main boyfriend gave me a pretty big hickey on my neck and I don't want my other boyfiends to see it and start asking questions. Is there any way to get rid of it quickly or am I going to have to wear a turtleneck or scarf in the middle of summer?

The best way to get rid of a hickey is to cover it with makeup that matches your skin tone. There is something called a "blemish eraser" which might help cover it over. A hickey is actually blood that gets trapped in the skin after it is sucked out of the capillaries by your boyfriend going to town on your neck. It takes time for the body to reabsorb this blood. It is not dangerous, but it does leave a mark. You can also try putting a warm, wet washcloth against the spot and see if that helps speed up the process. Good luck.

I was in a nine-year monogamous relationship in which I typically did not have trouble achieving or maintaining erections or ejaculating. I have been single for eight years now. In the past couple of years I have progressively had more and more difficulty achieving and maintaining erections with partners. I can not link it to any particular characteristic of the men themselves, nor can my doctor find a cause for this since it is possible for me to masturbate to climax. I do find however that it takes a rougher approach in handling myself to become aroused and ultimately cum. I also have been on depression medication periodically, though none of what I am on currently lists erectile dysfunction as a side effect. I am despondent about this problem because it destroyed my last relationship of six months, and is keeping me from seeking out sexual experiences with others! It is recurrent and consistent. I am also afraid that I am desensitized to a point where I will need to seek out more of the rough trade or fetish subcultures which I find always include behaviors like golden showers, swallowing pee, or piercing (which I am not into). When I have told guys to be rough they either don't do it right, or are put off. I just want to have a normal sex life, no kinky bullshit. I feel I have no hope.

First of all, don't give up. It sounds from your letter like you are depressed and depression can certainly interfere with sexual satisfaction. Antidepressants usually don't hamper an erection, but instead keep you from reaching an orgasm. If you are on medication now, this could be the problem. If you are not on medication you might need something to alleviate your depression.

While it may sound like I am giving you contradictory advice, depression and its treatment can be very complicated, especially where sexual gratification is involved. I urge you to talk with a psychiatrist about this.

I also want to reassure you that needing rougher pressure to bring yourself to an orgasm does not mean that you have to seek out "rough trade" or "fetish subcultures". All you need is an understanding partner. If you can bring someone to a climax in a way that they like, why shouldn't you expect the same in return? Many men like a firm touch. You should try bringing yourself to the brink of an orgasm and then let your partner finish the job.

This might help you get used to different techniques and stimuli. I don't think asking to be aroused with a firm grip is enough to destroy a relationship and I suspect there were many other issues at hand.

I hope you will work on this problem. It won't be easy and will need time and patience on both your part and the part of an understanding partner. Therapy will also probably help. Please don't feel despondent.

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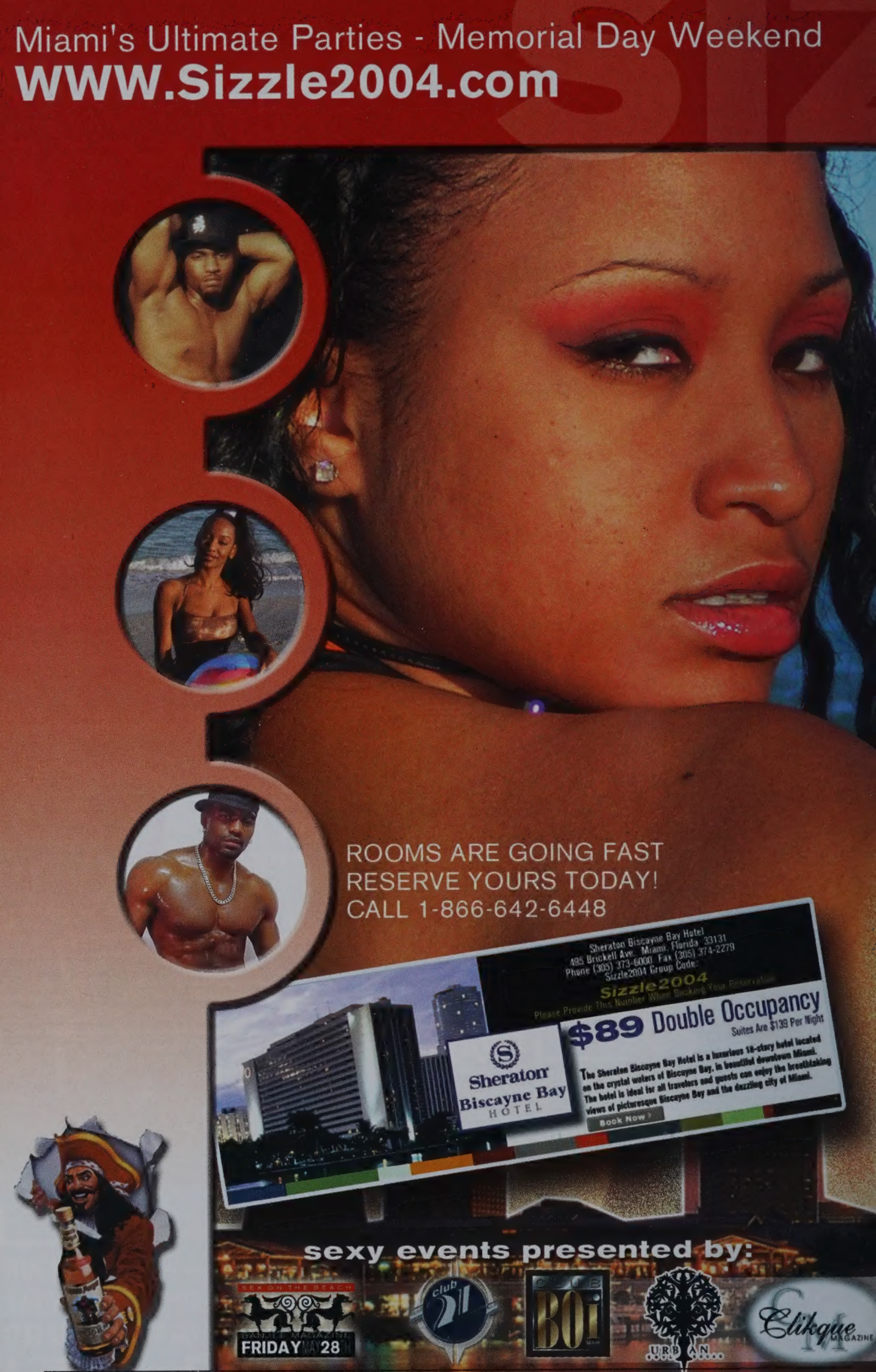

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There are several court cases and recent legislative actions that have brought tremendous public attention to the fight for civil marriage equality for same-sex couples. On Nov. 18, 2003, Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to deny same-sex couples the right to a civil marriage, after arguments by the Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) on behalf of seven couples seeking the right to civil marriage. The court's decision in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health (SJC-08860), which extends full and equal marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples and bisexual couples in same-sex relationships in the state of Massachusetts, has been stayed, allowing the Mass. legislature time to 'fix' state law to bring it in line with the constitution.

In November, a judge in New Jersey dismissed a suit by seven gay couples that were denied marriage licenses. The ruling in Lewis v. Harris found no fundamental right to same-sex marriage under state or federal law. Lambda Legal is appealing the decision.

In addition to these court cases, in September, California Governor Gray Davis signed into law AB 205, a bill passed by the California Assembly that grants domestic partners many of the rights that California state law affords to married couples. These protections include custody provisions and child support obligations, authority to make decisions regarding funeral arrangements and community property, as well as mutual responsibility for debts and joint assessment of income for determining eligibility for state government assistance programs.

These events have prompted religious conservatives and other opponents of civil marriage equality to stage several attacks on gay and lesbian civil rights. In May, Representative Marilyn Musgrove (R-Colo.) introduced the Federal Marriage Amendment into Congress. The legislation would amend the constitution to legally define marriage as a "union between a man and a

woman." In addition to the Federal Marriage Amendment, in October, the Family Research Council and other anti-gay groups sponsored "Marriage Protection Week," an event intended to garner publicity and support for their efforts to deny marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples.

Since last month's historic U.S. Supreme Court decision in Lawrence v. Texas, issues surrounding equal marriage rights for gay, lesbian and bisexual couples have received quality, widespread media coverage. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health will doubtless result in strong reactions from same-sex couples impacted by the decision, LGBT and allied civil rights groups, and people and organizations opposed to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality.

CIVIL MARRIAGE, CIVIL UNIONS & DOMESTIC PARTNER PROTECTIONS IN THE U.S.

As of July 13, 2003, no U.S. state allows same-sex couples to marry. However, three states -- Hawaii, California and Connecticut -- and the District of Columbia do confer upon same-sex couples a limited number of legal protections. California, Hawaii and the District of Columbia have official state/district registries for same-sex couples; and California AB 205 (passed 41-29 by the state Assembly on June 4 and currently being considered by the Senate) would expand existing, limited domestic partner rights to include child custody, financial duties to children, public assistance, transfer of property, tax exemptions, organ donations and burial. Connecticut, while it extends limited legal protections to gay couples, does not allow them to register their commitments.

Only one state -- Vermont -- has enacted civil unions, which extend all of the state benefits and protections of marriage (though none of the federal ones) to same-sex couples.

EQUAL MARRIAGE RIGHTS IN CANADA

On June 10, 2003, the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that Canada's ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional, violating gay couples' equality rights under the Canadian Constitution's Charter of Rights. On June 17, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced he would not appeal the ruling and his cabinet enacted a national policy recognizing same-sex marriage, making Canada the third country after the Netherlands and Belgium to extend marriage to gay couples. On June 13, a coalition of LGBT legal groups (including GLAD, Lambda Legal, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project and Freedom to Marry) issued a joint advisory informing U.S. couples of their right to marry in Canada and advising them on the legal issues and challenges they may face when they return to and attempt to see their marriage recognized in the United States. For more information, read "Joint Advisory: Thinking of Getting Married in Canada?"

FEDERAL & STATE ANTI-GAY MARRIAGE LAWS ("DOMA")

In 1996, President Clinton signed a law designed to restrict the ability of same-sex couples to have their relationships recognized at the state and federal levels. Known as "DOMA," this so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" defines marriage as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife," and bars same-sex couples from receiving any of the federal protections afforded married couples, including but not limited to: Social Security, Medicare, family leave, health care, disability, military and many other federal benefits. This anti-gay marriage legislation also opened the door for states to pass laws that deny recognition of same-sex couples' civil marriages from other states.

To date 37 states have passed similar laws, although only three -- Alaska, California and Nevada -- have done so through popular vote. All other anti-gay marriage laws have been enacted by state legislatures. Thus far, the constitutionality of the federal DOMA has not been challenged, although many believe it violates Article IV, Section 1 -- the "full faith and credit clause" -- of the U.S. Constitution.

FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

There is a movement afoot to amend the U.S. Constitution to bar states from recognizing same-sex marriage or any union which extends the protections, rights and responsibilities of marriage to same-sex couples. The Federal Marriage Amendment is designed not only to write discrimination against same-sex couples into the U.S. Constitution, but also to undo existing state, county and city protections for gay and lesbian couples and families.

BY DEB PRICE / THE DETROIT NEWS

Black Supporters Of Gays Ignored

Something's been wrong with the picture of gay America: It's been way too white for way too long.

That distorted image has had damaging consequences: Seeing so many white faces accompanying gay stories, many heterosexual African-Americans understandably equate being gay with being white. Sensing discomfort and disapproval in their families and churches, many black gay men and lesbians stay closeted, both from those they love dearly and the media.

Meanwhile, mostly white right-wing groups have effectively showcased well-known African-Americans who oppose gay equality.

The result of all this?

Americans are much more likely to know that Colin Powell opposed allowing gays to serve openly in the military than to know that supporters of gay marriage include such prominent African-Americans as Coretta Scott King, Congressman John Lewis, former Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders, actress Whoppi Goldberg, Democratic presidential hopefuls Al Sharpton and Carol Moseley Braun, and the Rev. William Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist denomination.

And probably few heterosexuals of any race realize the key role that gay African-Americans are playing in the legal struggle for equal rights for those of us who're gay.

Last summer, when the Supreme Court handed gay Americans our biggest victory ever, African-American Tyron Garner and his white partner made history for successfully challenging their arrest for private, romantic intimacy.

And as the recent Massachusetts ruling that marriage licenses must be given to gay couples beginning next May demonstrated, black gays are central to the drive to allow gay couples to marry in this country. That ruling grew out of a suit filed by seven couples, two of them black-white unions. And in New Jersey, a black lesbian couple is among the couples fighting to wed.

Yet the fact that gay America is every color rarely gets broadcast.

"When 99 percent of the time the image they see about gay rights is a white face, black heterosexuals will go, 'It is not a black issue.' Yet we who are black and gay know just how important being able to marry is to our relationships," says North Carolina activist Mandy Carter.

Now, valiantly countering the effort to drum up support in the black community to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban gay marriages, a black gay group is working to improve the picture. The new National Black Justice Coalition plans to seek allies in black churches, reach out through the black media and talk at leading black conferences to stress how such a ban would hurt black same-sex families.

"When we talk about marriage equality as a civil rights issue, the African-American community can be an ally," says gay African-American Keith Boykin, a former aide to President Clinton and with Carter is a founder of the Justice Coalition. "It's a question of framing the issue."

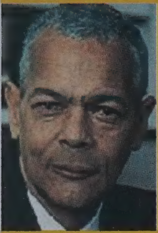
Polling illustrates the coalition's uphill road: Blacks are more likely than whites to think sexual orientation "can be changed" (58 percent versus 39 percent in a Pew Research Center poll in November) and to think gay sex should be illegal (64 versus 48 percent in a December New York Times poll). On gay marriage, survey results are mixed, with Pew finding 60 percent of both blacks and whites opposed, but the Times reporting much more black opposition (75 versus 59 percent).

Gary Daffin, co-chair of a leading Massachusetts gay group, says persuading fellow black gays to be out in the black community is central to changing hearts.

"Gay and lesbian people of color have to show the courage that our ancestors showed in fighting racism and segregation," Daffin says. "What changed history was people saying, 'We are going to put our lives on the line because we don't want our children to live like this.' We don't want the next generation of black gay kids to have to hide."

You can reach Deb Price at (202) 906-8205 or dprice@detnews.com.

SUPPORTS OF MARRIAGE EQUALITY



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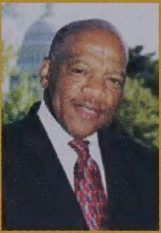

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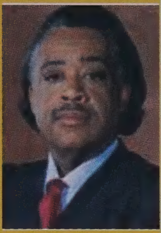


REV. AL SHARPTON,
Presidential Candidate

Timeline On Blacks and Marriage Equality

1724: Article VIII of the Louisiana Black Code forbids marriages between slaves without the consent of the slave master.

1865: Section 3 of the Mississippi Black Code prohibits blacks from marrying whites "and any person who shall so intermarry shall be deemed guilty of felony, and on conviction thereof shall be confined in the State penitentiary for life."

Oct. 1, 1948: In Perez v. Sharp, the California Supreme Court becomes the first state court to strike down laws against interracial marriage.

Jun. 12, 1967: In Loving v. Virginia, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down laws that prohibited interracial marriage.

July 12, 1996: The U.S. House of Representatives passes the "Defense of Marriage Act."

Jun. 26, 2003: In Lawrence v. Texas, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down anti-gay sodomy laws in Texas and other states.

Oct. 25, 2003: Rep. John Lewis, writing in an op-ed in the Boston Globe, calls for an end to discrimination in marriage.

Nov. 18, 2003: In Goodridge v. Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court holds that barring an individual from the protections, benefits, and obligations of civil marriage solely because that person would marry a person of the same sex violates the Massachusetts Constitution.

Nov. 18, 2003: Rev. William Sinkford, a black minister and president of the Unitarian Universalist Church, applauds the decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

Nov. 24, 2003: Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun states her support for marriage equality during the presidential candidates' debate in Des Moines, Iowa.

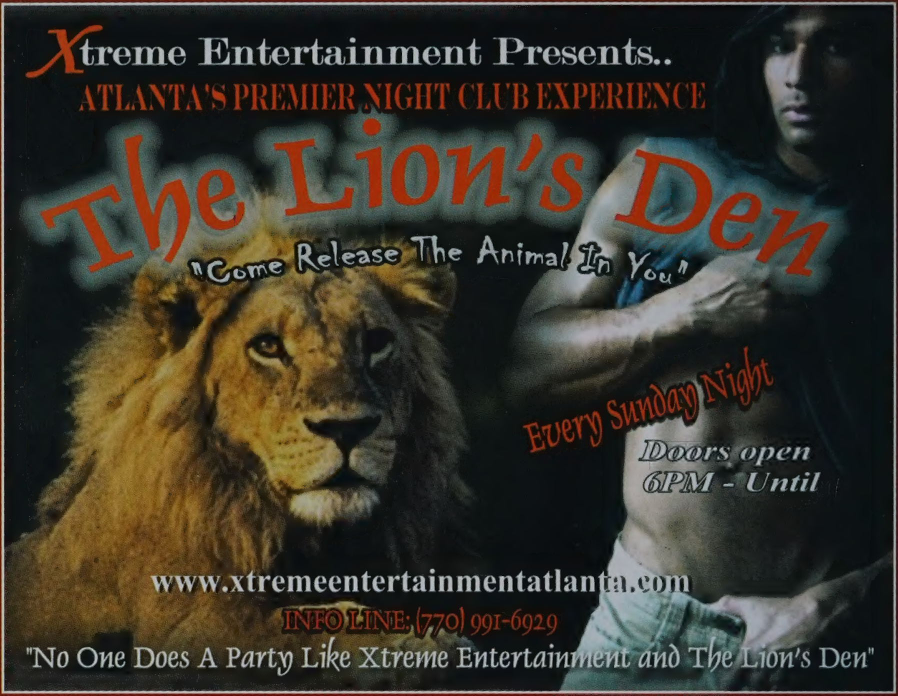
Nov. 24, 2003: Rev. Al Sharpton states his support for marriage equality during the presidential candidates' debate in Des Moines, Iowa.

Nov. 25, 2003: Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) and four co-sponsors introduce an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to deny marriage rights for same-sex couples.

Dec. 8, 2003: The National Black Justice Coalition announces a campaign to build black support for marriage equality.

Feb. 2, 2004: Civil rights leader Julian Bond announces his support for marriage equality.

Source: National Black Justice Coalition (www.nbjcoalition.org)



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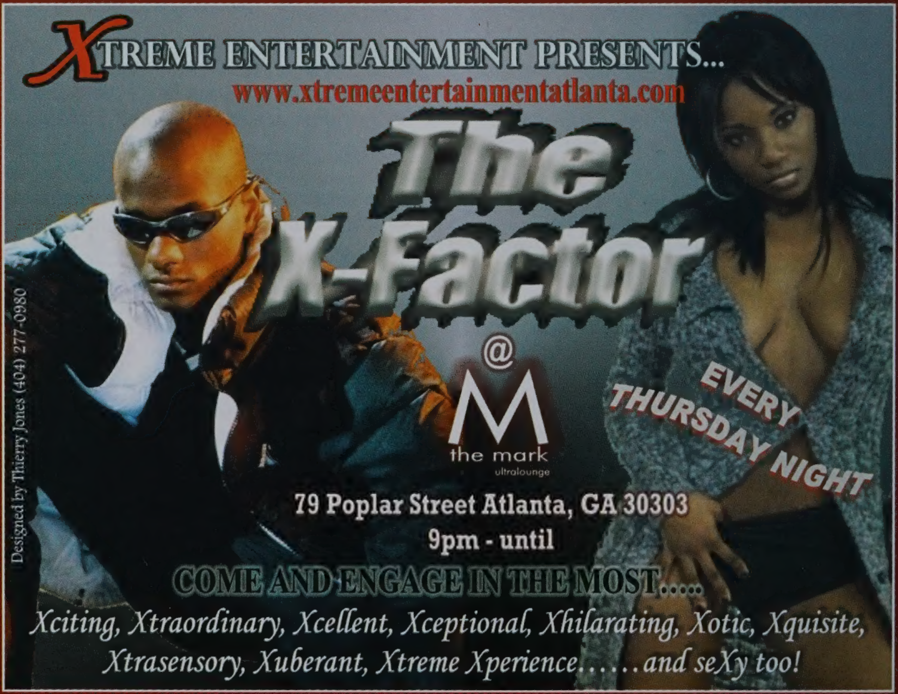

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BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

JUMPIN' THE BROOM

Anna and Leon Washington are veteran gay parents, meaning they have raised a homosexual to adulthood (quite successfully I must say), not that they are gay. They could easily qualify to lead a PFLAG workshop for parents of all stages though they are no paragons of political correctness. Every once in awhile, they might still say the "wrong thing." They raised two boys, one straight, one bent, in the watershed '60's and 70's, across the intersection of civil rights, black power, gay, and women's liberation movements. Homosexuality was still listed as a psychological disorder by the APA when I started showing classic signs of deviance. There was no PFLAG my mother could consult after I confirmed what she already knew. Since queerness was considered an illness, my father tried to make me see a psychologist in order to fix my broken arrow. My family worked hard to allow each other to be our selves. My parents had only each other to find a way to love a son from Oz who resided with them in Queens, New York.

When my mother told me of their intentions to come to Atlanta for my birthday, I cringed. I was looking forward to cutting up that night and I could not carry on so with Ma and Dad present. Eventually I got over myself and invited my friends to come meet the parents. The mix included singles and couples like Duncan and his partner David who always make it a point to see the folks whenever they visit. Last fall, I watched them "jump the broom" at their commitment ceremony. They used this ritual of our enslaved African ancestors who were denied the right to legally marry in order to demonstrate that over a century after the Emancipation Proclamation, gays are still denied that same right. I watched Duncan and my mother, two headstrong Capricorns, as they played catch-up in the kitchen while restocking the hors d'oeuvres. I pondered these two marriages and the years they managed and muddled together. I considered how two heterosexual strangers could get a marriage license without a hitch and instantaneously acquire advantages that are forbidden to Duncan and David, and freely enjoyed by Anna and Leon.

Like many others, I once considered marriage as a non-priority for my folk. I though that this particular discrimination seemed far less debilitating than the ills of self-hatred, black church vilification, and HIV scapegoating. Although I knew that marriage equality would offer very real and needed benefits, I assumed we were not ready for them. Given the lack of self-acceptance among us, how many of us would marry if we could? Is that number enough to justify the effort required to mobilize folks to action? But as I watched my parents party with my friends, half of whom are for all practical purposes married, I thought this is no less relevant than the other social support needs that our organizations tend to address. We may not see them on "Queer as Folk" or "Will and Grace" but there are thousands of black gay couples across the country, some out, some passing as roommates on Thanksgiving. And as they demonstrate comparable levels of loyalty, and certainly pay comparable taxes, they deserve the same rights. Only legalized marriage offers the full range of partner benefits. So why should my friends settle for some discount package crafted to appease the oxymoronic "compassionate conservatives" who weigh justice on the scales of their personal comfort?

I had to ask myself why I was not more fired up about this before? Why is the black gay media skittish if not silent about the subject? As a peo-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 28

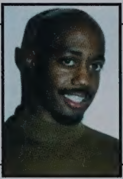
STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

ple who have been cast out by outcasts, we operate from a survivalist frame of reference. We are too often all too happy just to get by. The AIDS crisis summoned the most impressive mobilization of black gays to date because we were dying from the virus as well as the complacency and judgment of our own people. We are slow to self-advocate as gay black people unless our very survival is undeniably threatened. Of course, we will not die from the lack of the right to marry. We will just continue to live a lower form of life confined by culturally sanctioned barbwire. Is it that we are too afraid to demand full equality before this country is ready to give it up without a fight? While we are quick to call out white gay advocacy groups for ignoring our political issues, we hesitate to address them ourselves. I am not espousing that we do like white gays do, but that we do get up and do something in the context of our own needs and resources. We have to find the courage to dispel the myth of scarcity that justifies everything we will not do for ourselves. The dearth of capital throughout black lgbt communities is real. The illusion that we don't not have the funds to mount and sustain black gay political advocacy is not. As we dismiss the fight for legal gay marriage as a white thang, your state legislature and your Governor Purdue have launched a preemptive war on rights you do not even have yet. As long as black gays dare to love and live together, then gays' right to marry is a black thing. As long as black church leaders like Rev. Walter Fauntroy dispute the indisputable parallels between gay civil rights and black civil rights, it is a contentious black thing. And if both Coretta Scott King and Rev. Al Sharpton publicly support gays right to marry, well it just does not get any blacker than that.

This domestic War on Freedom may be the jolt we needed to "get up, stand up" again. That night, at some point between the spades game, the fried chicken, and the "Hey Ya" living room soundtrack, it hit me. My birthday party was a gay Soul Food set that included at least four generations and six couples at various levels of commitment. Two of these couples included one partner who is unemployed. They could really use the perks that my parents worked to buy their own home, raise two kids, and retire comfortably. I was awakened to a new dream. I believe it is a dream worth us fighting for, a dream of possibilities where I can meet, love and legally marry the man of my dreams. I dream a world where my husband and I would provide each other lots of emotional and financial support, backrubs and toe curling sex, and we would also get tax cuts, partner insurance benefits, and uncontested power of attorney should one of us become incapacitated. We would reap what we deserve because in 2004, black gays refused to let the bigots "x away our right to life"*. They wrote their representatives, lobbied passionately, walked out in the middle of damning sermons, and insisted on bringing their partners to the family reunion. Well, a single brother can dream, can't he?

*Excerpted from the poem "Where Will You Be" written by Pat Parker, a Black lesbian writer.

Action Note: The National Black Justice Coalition is an ad hoc committee founded to generate support among black people for marriage equality for gays. They can be reached at www.nbjcoalition.org. or 212-330-6599. Keep the Faith.



Mr. Washington was lovingly raised by Anna and Leon Washington in Queens, New York and has lived in Atlanta for 11 years. His writings have been published in Clikque, Venus, Arise, Washington Blade, Southern Voice, Atlanta Voice, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, He currently serves as the Volunteer and Training Coordinator for Positive Impact, which provides mental health services for people affected by HIV. He can be reached at cwash360@cs.com.

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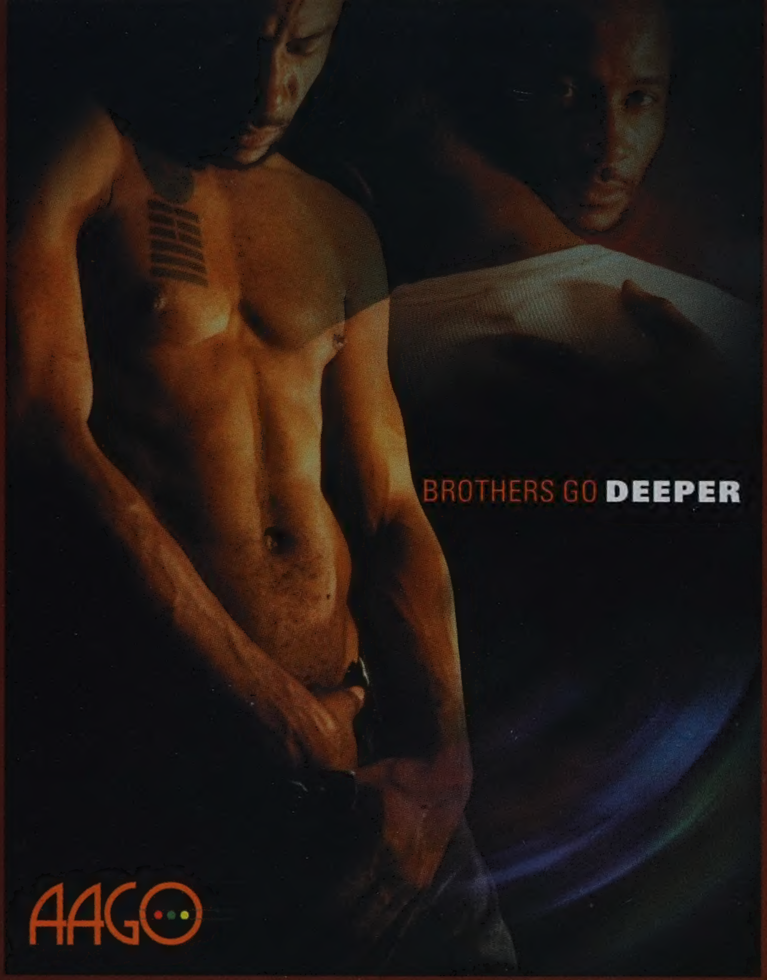

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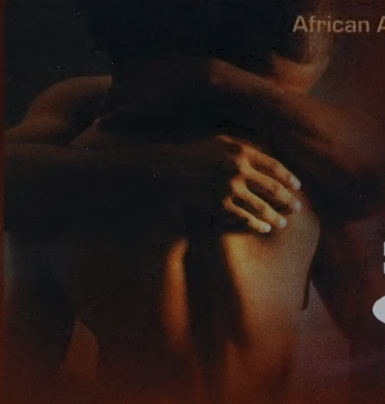

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By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

ONE FAMILY'S STORY.

Wanda and Sheryl

Wanda and Sheryl live in Durham, N.C. Sheryl works as an office administrator and Wanda is a leader in her community. Like most committed couples, after spending eight years together, they decided to buy a home.

On top of the expenses of buying a home, including a costly inspection and closing fees, Wanda and Sheryl had to spend even more money on legal documents to guarantee that if something happened to one of them, the other would be able to inherit the home without interference from the state or a hostile family members.

Photo by Judy G. Rolfe

No matter how much this devoted couple has promised to each other, the law does not provide them with the same legal protections it does for married couples. If either Wanda or Sheryl ends up in the hospital, the hospital could prevent the other one from visiting her. And even though they've both contributed to Social Security all of their lives, neither would receive the survivor benefits if the other one died, like Wanda's mother received when her father died.

Why talk about this now? Because extreme political organizations like Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council are playing politics with the lives of people like Wanda and Sheryl. These so-called "pro-family" groups claim that providing basic protections to devoted gay couples would bring about "the end of society as we know it."1 They even want to amend the U.S. Constitution to deny any legal protections for gay partners and their families.

Meanwhile, gay and lesbian couples in long-term, committed relationships aren't eligible for government-issued civil marriage licenses and the legal protections they provide. Although no government should ever tell religious institutions who they can marry, the government should not discriminate in providing civil marriage licenses to any devoted couple.

America has problems - an uncertain economy, the loss of millions of jobs and threats to our national security - but loving couples like Wanda and Sheryl are not one of them. Like every other couple in America, gay and lesbian couples in long-term, committed relationships deserve the same benefits and protections under the law.

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SFSC

This PSA is Brought to you by The Syphilis Coalition and HEALTH

ALWAYS A BRIDES MAID

By Scott Bogan

Every so often a straight friend of mine will ask me what I think about gay marriage and my usual answer is "I don't know. I never really thought about it". But since the topic has been in the news lately, I have been giving it some thought. Not so much whether or not I am in favor of it but more so would I get married if I could. Let me first start off by saying that while it is true that I am dating, I don't know anyone that I am even remotely considering as prospect! Whew...I can hear the sigh of relief being breathed all over Atlanta.

The truth of the matter is that relationships are hard. Strike that.... What I meant to say was relationships are damn hard. In fact, life as a single person is hard enough so when you try to factor in another person with their idiosyncrasies, morals, values, beliefs etc. coupled your own there is bound to be chaos. Oh yeah, I didn't even mention two men that have testosterone running through their veins which constantly puts them in direct competition with one another. Then, more specifically, you have me. I am a completely cerebral, overly analytical, spoiled complex person that possesses every Gemini trait known. Now don't get me wrong, I am caring, affectionate, I'm not spoiled to the point that I am selfish and I definitely know how to love someone but the problem is (as with most people) my ego. My ego will not allow me to let go of any of my past experiences or the experiences of my friend's that I have witnessed first hand. I think the reason I can't let go is because I consider myself to be a smart person and smart people don't allow themselves to make the same mistake twice. Or do they?

PHOTO BY FORREST COLEY wcoley@psualum.com

I believe that marriage is a commitment that is supposed to last for a lifetime. People exchange vows, merge finances and combine households planning on growing old with a significant other. The problem arises when we start to romanticize this idea with thoughts of midnights in front of the fireplace, vacations on the beach and kisses under the mistletoe. You know all that bullshit you see in television commercials. We start to believe that is how we should be living in some ideological television euphoric bliss. I wish they would create a television commercial where a couple is having a heated argument and neither person is saying what they really feel. Instead, both people are focusing on their anger, pointing the finger and calling each other names until someone storms out or as is the case a lot of the time between two men, it comes to blows. Yes, we all get lonely and most of us want a relationship. What we don't realize is that all relationships require work and less than half of us are willing to do the work. This is the kind of work that has to be done at home first. Work that requires honesty with yourself and with your partner and most people don't have that kind of honesty in them. Please notice that I didn't say most people aren't honest....I said most people can't be honest with themselves about themselves. If you need an example, see the previous paragraph. I was at a party with a straight couple that I know who recently married and I asked them "how's married life?" They both replied almost simultaneously "the shit is hard". I love them for that response because while it is not the not the typical "oh, it's wonderful" it is very real and very honest. I look at the model of my own parents. My mother, after being married to my father for 29 years decided that she was sick of him. She came home from work one day with a legal pad

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 36

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

that had every item in our house on it and told him "This is a list of everything in the house, put a check by what you want. I am leaving." And she left. I admire my mother for this because she realized what she wasn't getting out of her relationship and she made a decision. More importantly, I admire my father because after my mother left, my father realized that he wasn't pulling his weight in the relationship, decided to do the work and won her back. After 3 years of separation, they reconciled. Then there are two guys that I know that live in NYC. As I understand the story, they met during gay pride spent the night with each other, moved in together shortly there after and have been together now for about 12 or 13 years. They are even raising a child. I could be wrong but I would be willing to bet my right arm that they have had some difficult times throughout their years together. But through it all they have managed to stick together probably because of their love, friendship and their ability to do "the work".

Over the Christmas holidays, I woke up one morning to find that I could not hear out of either of my ears. After calling my doctor's office, yelling into the phone trying to explain my emergency and having the receptionist yell back at me telling me when I could come in, I was so overwhelmed that I broke down and started to cry. It turned out that during my weekly swim at the gym, water became trapped in both of my ears and they got infected. But while I was going through all of this all I could think of was 1) does Prada make a hearing aid and 2) how alone I really am. Not many people know this but more than anything in the world, I am afraid of growing old by myself and this was a very real example of what could be waiting for me in my years to come.

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By FRANKLIN LOWE, MD

Penis Enlargements

Consider The Risk First

Men have gone to great lengths (pun intended) searching for ways to increase the size of their penises. While techniques vary from wearing penile weights, using vacuum devices and undergoing penile lengthening surgery, the goal is always the same -- to have a larger penis.

Like breast implants, penile lengthening surgery is cosmetic surgery that promises to make your penis larger; however, it has never been endorsed or approved by the American Urological Association.

Penile lengthening surgery was initially developed and utilized for people with congenital abnormalities, including microphallus or bladder exstrophy. The surgery was not originally intended for widespread use for cosmetic enhancement. Unfortunately, a whole industry of penile plastic surgery has emerged, targeting the countless men who are unsatisfied with their penis size. But there have been several problems.

Many physicians who open penile enhancement centers and advertise their services in magazines and gay newspapers get flooded with men searching for a larger phallus. Of the thousands of men who've been operated on, many have complained of disfiguring results. Consequently, as often as these centers have opened, they've closed. Many surgeons have lost their licenses and/or are no longer practicing medicine.

How does it work?
Penile enlargement surgery involves four procedures, none of which actually elongate your penis. The first involves cutting the penile suspensory ligament, which holds your penis to the pubic bone. Cutting this ligament lets your penis fall away from your pubic bone, giving it greater exposure. The downside to this surgery is that your penis is unhinged from the pubic bone, so your penis loses its anchor. When erect, your penis points down, which frequently causes difficulty maintaining an erection during intercourse. In addition, sensory nerves to your penis are often damaged or cut during the surgery because the nerves run through the ligament area at the base of the penis.

Is my penis too small?

* Even though very few men are satisfied with the size of their penis, most men are "normal." The average size of an adult penis is six inches. There is some variability, due to race and genetic factors. Almost 95 percent of men have a stretched penile length between 4.9 and 7.3 inches. Penis size may be measured very inaccurately because determining the true base of your penis depends on how much pressure you place on the skin/fat at your pubic region. The second

DID YOU KNOW?

- Penile enlargement surgery involves four procedures, none of which actually elongate the penis.
- After surgery, many men are left with lumpy-bumpy, desensitized and/or scarred genitals.
- Many of the surgeons who performed a high volume of penile enlargement surgeries face large numbers of malpractice lawsuits. What the promotional information and advertisements for penile lengthening surgery won't tell you is that the numerous risks of this procedure by far outweigh the minimal benefits.

By FRANKLIN LOWE, MD

part of a lengthening procedure is a Y-V or Z plasty on the pre-pubic skin. This is a fancy name for an operation that adds skin to the base of your penis. This "added" skin is necessary to cover the unhinged part of your penis, and lets it hang down further. Even though these incisions are made in areas covered by your pubic hair, ugly scars and loss of pubic hair frequently result. Scar contraction (shrinkage) and keloid formation are other common side effects to this part of the surgery.

The third aspect of penis enlargement surgery is the enhancement of penile girth. This was initially accomplished by injecting fat under your penile skin. It may sound great, but it didn't work well because the fat gets rapidly absorbed by your body in some areas, but not in others -- so you're left with a "lumpy-bumpy" penis. Subsequent attempts to increase penile circumference employ bands of fat harvested from one part of your body, which are then sewn onto your penis shaft. It gets worse: the skin on your penis must be peeled back before the fat can be sewn to the shaft. After this is done, the surgeon pulls your skin back down to cover the fat. Often you'll end up with a lumpy-bumpy penis when varying amounts of fat get absorbed back into your body. Scarring often persists, which leaves an irregular penis.

The final component of enlargement surgery is pre-pubic liposuction, which gives the impression of a larger penis in the face of a flatter stomach. It was originally utilized to harvest fat for injection under penile skin as well as for flattening a paunchy pre-pubic area.

Does it work?
In essence, this surgery only provides the appearance of a larger penis; nothing is done to actually add length. It's only an illusion, at best, and a very expensive illusion at that. Pre-pubic liposuction does provide some cosmetic improvement if you have a fat paunch. Even so, these procedures carry high risks of scarring, disfigurement and desensitization of your penis.

Do not be fooled! Do not do it! You are more apt to end up with a disfigured penis than a larger one.
Key Points
---There are high risks associated with penile enlargement surgery, and little benefit to be gained.

--- Don't do it!

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

story, they met during gay pride spent the night with each other, moved in together shortly there after and have been together now for about 12 or 13 years. They are even raising a child. I could be wrong but I would be willing to bet my right arm that they have had some difficult times throughout their years together. But through it all they have managed to stick together probably because of their love, friendship and their ability to do "the work".

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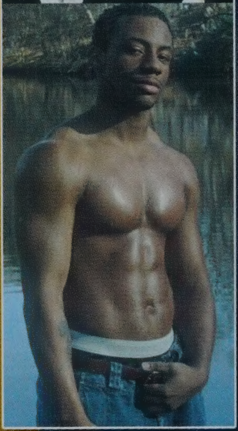
I would love to find my soul mate or better yet someone that I could just mesh with and yes, I would consider the possibility of marriage. Am I fooling myself into believing that this person is going to make my life easier, there won't be difficult times and we are going to live happily ever after? The answer is no. In the real world, marriage/relationships are very difficult and require a lot of work that has to be done willingly by both parties. So the next time I am asked what I think about gay marriage my response will be "If two people love each other, respect each other, are committed to each other and are friends.....I say go for it".

Scott Bogan
clikquescott@aol.com

For The Best
Atlanta, Look T



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By SARAH ALBERT

Women's Health: Your Top Ten List

More than 185 women recently took our second annual health survey. You told us about your interests, and shared some of your most private health concerns. The results have been tallied.

#1. Depression and Anxiety

Depression tops your list of health concerns for the second year in a row. Last year, approximately 35 percent of respondents said depression was their most pressing health concern. This year, 21.3 percent of women surveyed said depression was their top health concern. In addition, about 52.7 percent of respondents have been diagnosed with anxiety or depression, and 25.4 percent of respondents were interested in learning more about stress management.

#2. Sexual Addiction

If you think only men want to learn more about sexual addiction, you're wrong. More than 15 percent of women said they were most interested in sexual addiction, when choosing from a list of compulsive/addictive behaviors.

#3. Club Drugs

When choosing from a list of legal and illegal drugs, more than 10 percent of survey respondents were most interested in recreational drugs, including ecstasy and special K.

#4. Prescription Drug Abuse

In recent news, the pain medication OxyContin has received quite a bit of media attention because of its potential for abuse. For some, it has offered needed relief for disease and injury-related pain. For others, it has been the cause of addiction, suffering and pain. Yet prescription drug abuse has been a problem long before OxyContin hit the market.

#5. Herpes and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

A lot of lesbian and bisexual women feel protected from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) during woman-to-woman sex. When asked which STD they wanted more information about, more than 50 percent of respondents chose none. Yet the fact is, women who have sex with women (WSW) are at risk for STDs, and the latest research points to a lack of education on the part of women and their health care providers.

By SARAH ALBERT

#6. Booze

"Look at the community. It revolves so much around bars and clubs," said Michele Fitzsimmons, outreach coordinator for the Lesbian AIDS Project.

#7. Eating Disorders

Weight, body and food obsessions are alive and kicking in the LGBT communities.

Seventeen percent of survey respondents chose obesity as their top health concern, and 21.5 percent of respondents have had an eating disorder. Furthermore, 25.8 percent of women, when choosing from a list of addictive and compulsive behaviors, chose eating disorders as the most interesting, second only to alcohol abuse.

#8. Cancer

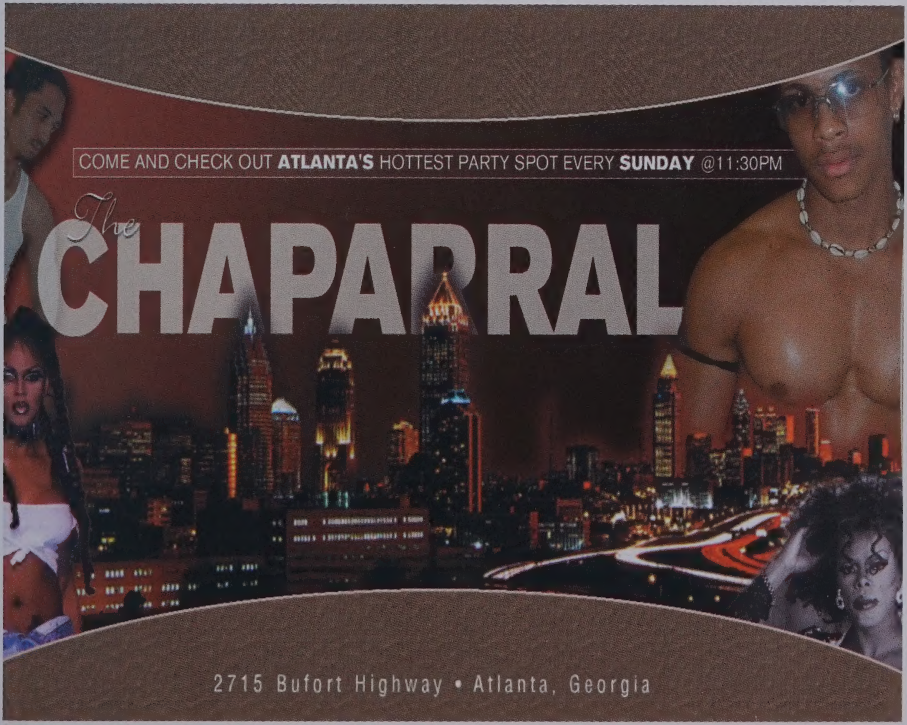
Cancer has long been a concern for lesbian and bisexual women. While only 4.4 percent of survey respondents said they'd been diagnosed with cancer, 15.9 percent of women said that cancer was their top health concern.

#9. Pap Test

When asked how often women go to the gynecologist, 23.5 percent of women said they have not been in more than two years, and 17.5 percent of women have never visited the gynecologist.

#10. Doctor's Don't Talk About Sex with Patients

A total of 43.5 percent of survey respondents said their doctors never ask about sexual practices, and 30.4 percent said their doctors rarely ask.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By Jeanne Sahadi

Most lucrative college degrees

Latest survey on hiring and starting salaries finds there may be more in '04 for many college grads.

The job market may not be booming. But for many in the college class of 2004, it won't be quite as dismal as it was for last year's grads.

That's the preliminary conclusion of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), which released its latest quarterly starting-salary survey on Thursday.

It's still early days for most college seniors on the hunt for a job. Only a small number of students typically have full-time job offers in hand halfway through their senior year. And the number of offers covered in NACE's winter survey is a small percentage of the offers covered in its fall survey, which reflects hiring through the previous August.

Still, NACE thinks there's reason for cautious optimism.

On balance, employers said they expect college-grad hires to be up 12.7 percent from last year, which is the first hiring increase in two years, said NACE spokesperson Camille Luckenbaugh.

WHAT'S A DEGREE WORTH?

	AVERAGE STARTING SALARY	CHANGE FROM YR. BEFORE
Computer engineering	$53,117	+0.7%
Chemical engineering	$52,563	+2.5%
Electrical engineering	$49,926	-1.4%
Mechanical engineering	$49,088	+2.0%
Computer science	$48,656	+8.9%
Industrial/manuf. engineering	$48,283	+0.4%
Information sciences	$42,108	+2.6%
Accounting	$42,045	+0.1%
Construction science	$41,232	-3.7%
Mngmt info systems/ Biz data processing	$41,103	+1.3%
Civil engineering	$41,046	-1.2%
Economics/Finance	$40,596	+0.5%
Logistics/ Materials mgmt.	$40,484	+3.5%
Business admin.	$37,368	+2.0%
Nursing	$37,253	-4.3%
Marketing	$36,071	+1.0%
Liberal arts majors*	$30,153	+3.5%
Elementary teacher education	$27,317	-6.8%
Psychology	$25,032	-8.0%

*as a group.

Source: NACE Winter 2004 Salary Survey

Based on the 2,300 offers covered in the current survey, more disciplines were reporting increases in starting salaries. Only a third of disciplines are seeing starting salaries drop, compared with nearly half at the same time last year.

Major dollars

By Jeanne Sahadi

Majors in computer engineering and chemical engineering top the list of most lucrative college degrees. Average starting salaries for computer engineers reached $53,117, up very slightly from their levels at this time last year. Starting salaries for chemical engineers, meanwhile, rose 2.5 percent to $52,563.

WHO MAKES SIX FIGURES?

- Video game artists, perfumers and perfusionists
- Fit models, court reporters and broadcast captioners

Starting salaries for those who major in civil engineering and electrical engineering still compare favorably with those of most other majors, but both experienced modest declines compared with last year.

For the first time since 2001, employers reported increases in starting salary offers to students in computer science, information sciences and systems, and management information systems.

The average offer for computer science majors rose 8.9 percent to $48,656; and more than half the offers surveyed topped $50,000.

Information sciences grads had an average starting salary of $42,108, up 2.6 percent from last year, while management information systems grads have seen starting salaries average $41,103, up a modest 1.3 percent.

Meanwhile, liberal arts majors still rank on the low-end of the salary scale, although as a group, the average starting offer rose 3.5 percent to $30,153.

Many psychology majors aren't as likely to see that kind of paycheck, however. Their starting salary average fell 8 percent to $25,032.

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On The Big Screen

AGAINST THE ROPES

RELEASE 2/20/04

Inspired by a true story, follows a successful female boxing manager, Jackie Kallen (Meg Ryan), as she trains a new fighter, Luther Shaw (Omar Epps), that she believes can be a champion.

DIRTY DANCING: HAVANA NIGHTS

RELEASE 2/27/04

The story, inspired by the 1987 original Dirty Dancing, is set in 1958 Cuba and centers on a 17-year-old girl (Romola Garai) who moves to the island with her family. She falls for a local dancer (Diego Luna) who helps her discover herself and the joy of experiencing newfound freedom.

TWISTED

RELEASE 2/20/04

In Twisted, a police detective, Jessica Shepard (Ashley Judd), tracks a serial killer who murders the men she dates. When Jessica begins blacking out before each murder takes place, her parter, Mike Delmarco (Andy Garcia), and the police commissioner (Samuel L. Jackson) target her as the prime suspect.

STARSKY & HUTCH

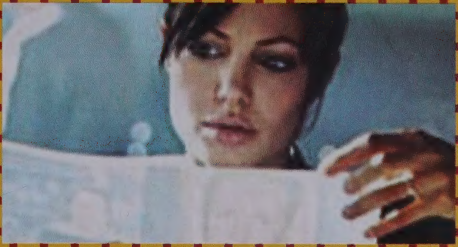
RELEASE 3/5/04

Based on the popular 1970s TV series, the story follows the titular pair of bachelor undercover cops (Ben Stiller as Dave Starsky, Owen Wilson as Ken "Hutch" Hutchinson), focusing on how the duo first met and teamed up on their first big case: uncovering a cocaine operation run by a big-time drug dealer named Reese (Vince Vaughn). The two zoom around town in a red and white 1974 Ford Torino, solving crimes with the help of Huggy Bear (Snoop Dogg), their street informant, and annoying their boss, Capt. Dobey (Fred Williamson).

Snoop Dogg as
Huggy bear

TAKING LIVES RELEASE 3/19/04

An FBI profiler (Angelina Jolie) is assigned to bring in a serial killer who has spent 20 years assuming the identities of those he has killed.



ETHERNAL SUNSHINE

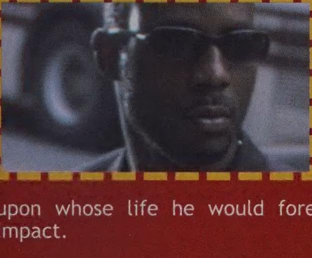
RELEASE 3/19/04

Joel (Jim Carrey) and Clementine (Kate Winslet) are a couple trying to jump-start their romance by forgetting all the painful moments of their relationship with the help of a brand-new treatment that simply erases parts of their memories. But when Clementine has Joel erased from her memory, he wants her gone from his memory and asks the doctor (Tom Wilkinson) who invented the process for help. But as he recalls the remaining few memories of their time together, Joel changes his mind, and tries to mentally overcome the procedure.

JERSEY GIRL

RELEASE 3/19/04

Set in New York and New Jersey, circa 1996, the story is said to be loosely based on writer-director Kevin Smith's own experiences as a husband and father. Ollie Trinke (Ben Affleck), a slick music promoter, meets a book editor (Jennifer Lopez) at a company Christmas party and the two fall madly, passionately in love. But marriage and fatherhood bring about sudden changes in Ollie's previously simple life.



NEVER DIE ALONE RELEASE 3/26/04

Based on cult novelist Donald Goines' novel of the same name, NEVER DIE ALONE is a richly literate film noir about King David (DMX), a hard-boiled, stylish criminal who returns to his hometown seeking redemption but finding only violent death. But he did not die alone... King David's final moments are spent with Paul (David Arquette), an aspiring journalist who knew him just a few minutes but upon whose life he would forever have an impact.

LADY KILLERS

RELEASE 3/26/04

In the Coen brothers' remake of the Peter Sellers-Alec Guinness original, Tom Hanks plays a Southern professor who organizes a gang of double-crossing thieves to rob a riverboat casino. They set up shop by renting a room in the house of an odd old lady. When she figures out what they're up to, the robbers decide she must be eliminated. But the woman isn't as easy to kill as they thought.

SHOWTIME RENEWS CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED SERIES

"THE L WORD" FOR SECOND SEASON

13-Episode Pick-Up Is Fastest Renewal In Premium Network's History

the L word
kit MAKING AMENDS

On the heels of the launch of its critically-acclaimed new series, THE L WORD, SHOWTIME has given the drama a 13-episode second-season renewal, it was announced today by Robert Greenblatt, Showtime's President of Entertainment. The pick-up represents the fastest renewal in the premium network's history, following its debut 11 days ago on January 18, 2004. Production on Season Two is slated to begin in June for the series which airs on Sundays at 10:00 PM ET/PT.

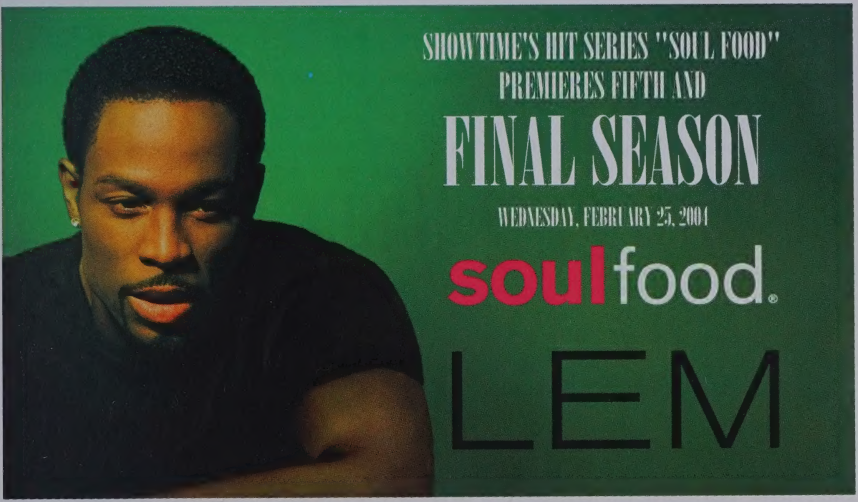
"This groundbreaking series has quickly and successfully captivated the attention of viewers, critics, journalists, and even a presidential candidate, creating the kind of incessant buzz that signals a hit," said Greenblatt. "We already have 14 episodes completed so we've seen the strong future of the series, and with its provocative storytelling, rich character development, amazing cast, and universal appeal, the decision to renew THE L WORD was a no-brainer."

same sex.
different city.
the L word
SUNDAYS AT 10PM

The first two episodes generated four times the Showtime prime-time average rating, pulling in a strong audience in spite of the fact that the second installment aired opposite the powerful Golden Globes telecast. From its unprecedented New York Magazine cover photo before the show had even debuted, to the full-page color cartoon of the cast in the New Yorker to references in the New York Times op.ed. pages, this show seems to be on everyone's lips. Even Gen. Wesley Clark has mentioned "the l word" in interviews lately and he wasn't only referring to the word "liberal."

THE L WORD was hailed by Tom Shales in The Washington Post as a "wickedly provocative...undeniably seductive TV." TV Guide called the series "a dynamic new drama." New York Magazine labeled the show "a powerful, wildly sexy new television series," while US Weekly called the concept "groundbreaking" and proclaimed: "Let the Emmy hype begin."

The drama is about a group of young women in Los Angeles, and follows their lives, careers, and romantic relationships - both gay and straight. The one-hour drama's cast includes Jennifer Beals, Erin Daniels, Leisha Hailey, Laurel Holloman, Mia Kirshner, Katherine Moennig and Pam Grier.


SHOWTIME'S HIT SERIES "SOUL FOOD"
PREMIERES FIFTH AND
FINAL SEASON
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2004
soul food.
LEM

SOUL FOOD, entering its fifth and final season on Wednesday, February 25 at 10:00 PM (ET/PT), has been a hit with critics and fans alike. Honored with numerous awards, the show also has the distinction of being the longest-running African-American drama on television and one of Showtime's most popular series. This year, for the second time in a row, SOUL FOOD was named "Outstanding Drama Series" at the 2003 NAACP Image Awards, and cast member Vanessa Williams was named "Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series."

Returning members of the award-winning cast include Nicole Ari Parker ("Remember the Titans," "Boogie Nights," "Brown Sugar"), Malinda Williams ("The Wood"), Vanessa Williams ("Melrose Place," "New Jack City"), Rockmond Dunbar ("Earth 2," "The Practice"), Darrin DeWitt Henson ("Longshot") and Aaron Meeks (SHOWTIME'S A STORM IN SUMMER). Boris Kodjoe, a series regular for three years, will be making two guest appearances in the role of Damon, love interest to Nicole Ari Parker's character Teri.

Pro Football Hall of Famer Jim Brown ("The Dirty Dozen") will appear in a multi-episode arc in season five as an FBI agent who pressures ex-con Lem (Darrin DeWitt Henson) to spy on his business partner. Also making guest appearances will be Hill Harper ("The Handler," "City of Angels") as Kenny's (Dunbar) brother Kelvin Chadway, Vondie Curtis Hall ("Chicago Hope") as a new love interest for Teri, Diahann Carroll reprising her role as 'Aunt Ruthie,' and Mario Van Peebles.

A dramatic series based on the 1997 hit film of the same name, SOUL FOOD premiered on Showtime in June 2000. SOUL FOOD is a Waterwalk Production, Edmonds Entertainment and State Street Pictures production in association with Paramount Network Television. Season five of SOUL FOOD is executive produced by Tracey Edmonds, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, George Tillman, Jr., Robert Teitel, Kathleen-McGhee Anderson and Salim Akil.

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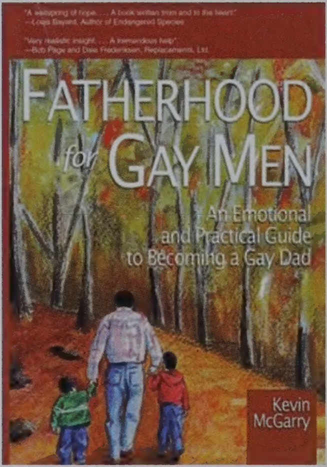
BY KEVIN RIORDAN

A D.C.-based author uses his personal experiences with adoption to demystify what gay family life is like for parents.

Bringing Home Baby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FATHERHOOD for GAY MEN
An Emotional and Practical Guide to Becoming a Gay Dad
Kevin McGarry

LIKE MANY GAY men of the Baby Boomer generation, Kevin McGarry suppressed his yearning to become a parent. It just didn't seem feasible or practical – back in the good ol' days of disco – for an out gay man to become a father.

But when McGarry began the process of separately adopting two Vietnamese boys, the affable accountant from Northern Virginia also unearthed his ability to write. "Fatherhood for Gay Men: An Emotional and Practical Guide to Becoming a Gay Day" is the product of these parallel journeys.

"I wanted to put my story out there to empower other gay men," McGarry says from the Arlington, Va., home he shares with his sons Andrew, 5, and Vincent, who turns 3 in December.

McGarry's user-friendly book – a combination of memoir, how-to guide and inspirational essay – combines practical advice, moral support and uplifting observations about the sometimes quietly kept joys of fatherhood.

Well-researched, candid, and written in clear, concise prose, "Fatherhood for Gay Men" summarizes everything from the international and domestic climate for single gay male adoption, which are more flexible in some ways than one might think, to the intricacies of the adoption process itself, which can be a challenge, but is hardly impossible.

The 108-page book helps demystify what many may see as a daunting prospect.

A 48-YEAR-OLD OHIO native who grew up the third of six children in an Irish-Catholic family, McGarry says he "always had parenting instincts," but denied them. He came out in 1980, long before the "gayby boom" was on the horizon.

Gradually, however, he came to realize that, in his words, "being gay and being a parent are not mutually exclusive."

And as it turned out, once he began the international adoption process – which involves the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship & Immigration Services, formerly the Immigration & Naturalization Service, and private agencies abroad that can cost up to $30,000 – McGarry discovered that his homosexuality was far less a concern than

BY KEVIN RIORDAN

he expected.

"It's kind of a side issue," he says.

Most countries do not allow their citizens to be adopted by gay men, but "Fatherhood for Gay Men" has a helpful summary of nations, such as Vietnam, that have no such restrictions.

He wasn't exactly starting from scratch. He'd kept a journal of his trip to Vietnam to adopt Andrew in 1998, and also when he later returned there to adopt Vincent. He wrote an outline "to see if [a book] was feasible," and then wrote three chapters, which he sent to two gay-friendly publishing houses.

Several months later, Haworth Press – home of the Harrington Park Press imprint – offered McGarry a contract.

"I wanted to take the mystery out of the adoption process," he says. "I'm not a superhuman. If I can do it, other gay men can do it."

While an adoptive gay dad does not share DNA with his kids, McGarry believes that "what you have to go through to adopt" helps forge the bond between parent and child.

"It's intense," he says. "You feel connected to this child by some osmosis."

The author also noted that while adoption is often a second choice for straight couples, it's often the first choice for gay men.

And while he wouldn't mind the occasional five-minute break from the full-time job of caring for two energetic boys, McGarry has no regrets.
" I give my sons a lot," he says. "And they give me a lot."

MORE INFO
'Fatherhood for Gay Men: An Emotional and Practical Guide to Becoming a Gay Dad'
Kevin McGarry – Harrington Park Press
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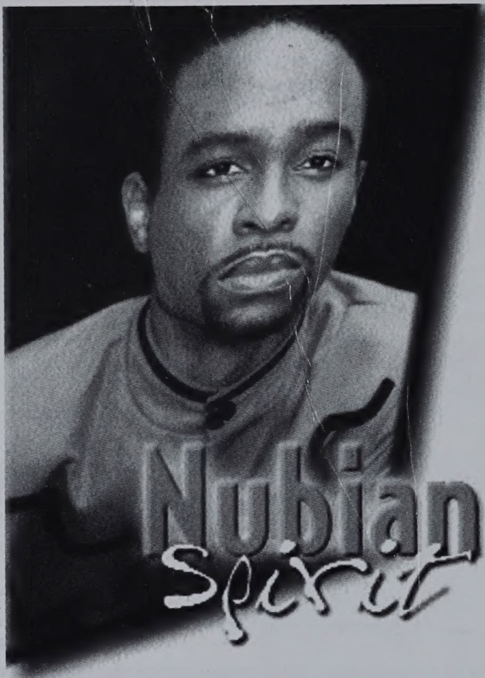

Becoming Your Ultimate Self

Love is celebrating yourself, your history, and your herstory.

Finding your place in the world can be a challenging task. Most of our lives are spent looking for "love." Let me cut to the chase and say right off "love is not something you get but something you do. Love cannot be found outside of yourself it must be something that you do from inside yourself." So indulge me for a few moments and consider. I recently had a conversation with some friends. We were discussing one of our friend's desires to find the right mate. Feeling that finding the right person wasn't going to happen soon he decided that he wanted to get a pet because "it will love me and I can love it." The group's reaction was mixed. Some asked if he was ready for the level of responsibility- he couldn't just go out, go on trips, or leave home for long periods of time on a whim because he has another life to care for. Others asked what he was really looking for. Because a pet gives what you give it but it cannot satisfy a desire that is deep within you. Something outside you cannot fulfill something that is missing from within yourself.

A pet, a person, a job, ...things can only be a distraction from the real problem or need. The reason is that love cannot be found "IN" someone or something else. Love must first come from you. What if you get the pet, job, home, person that you want (remember right now these things are objects of our interest and affection/desire) when the "thrill" is gone and "settling in" has occurred you are left with the same feelings or worse because now you have "what you wanted" but are still not happy. Have you ever gotten with the person you most wanted and after a period of time were bored, unhappy, or disinterested? Ever sat around wondering why she or he left? Ever lay in the bed next to "the one" wondering "what am I doing here"?

From the earliest moments of our lives we are bombarded with messages of love. Movies, television, music, and other images are constantly conjured up reminding us of the loneliness and that the only way to combat that loneliness is by being "in love" with someone. So begins our lives on a never-ending search for love. So without much guidance we seek out the images of love that are presented to us. We search for the perfect person, however we define "perfect." Sometimes it is how much money she or he can spend, what we can get from someone, how well they throw it down, how "beautiful" they are, or how they make us "feel." But if you are honest with yourself most of the time even satisfying these wants still leaves us lonely, even when we are not alone.

So love must come from inside. Your first step is to be honest with yourself about how you really feel about yourself. You have to be able to appreciate who you are. You exist exactly how you are supposed to. Your wants, desires, feeling, likes and dislikes are natural and normal. First you must rid yourself of feelings of worthlessness, powerlessness, and personal pain. Then accept yourself just as you are, on the inside. This does not mean that you cannot work on the outside. But make sure you are strong and secure first in tour thinking and feeling before you go after "fixing the outside appearance" which is fleeting.

Then celebrate who you are. Enjoy life. Give what you want, to others. If you want love do loving acts. But be clear that you are doing them because you want to and it's right, not because you want any particular reaction or action from someone else. Take some time this month and next month to learn about your history and herstory. Know that you come from a heritage that if full of greatness. This greatness is your birthright and your destiny is unlimited. Find out about the great African and African-American history makers who are a part of your cultural and racial greatness. Celebrate the great women in the world who have made a difference for all of us; whose lives light the way for true personal power and triumph for all of us.

Finally beloved be triumphant. Live a life that is not limited by what we think we have but by what we do in the world. Love is something that you do. The reward of love is love itself. The ideas that love is something that you can get, earn, find, lose, and such is wrong. The real key is that love is an action word. Love is something that you do. The key to love is that you must do love with no real expectations that anything will happen in return. This is true love. Love means celebrating yourself. And by celebrating your history and herstory you can add to the reasons to celebrate yourself. Then live triumphantly. Love is as love does.

Meditate on these thoughts: I live in Love as I let love live in me, through me, around me, and AS me. I acknowledge the hidden potential greatness inside me by recognizing the greatness of the "sheroes" and heroes in my life and culture. These are examples of what I can be if I love myself enough to be an agent of love in the world for others and myself. Love is what I do and I do love me. I love me, I love me, I love me and I will love others because of my love and respect for myself and my heritage.

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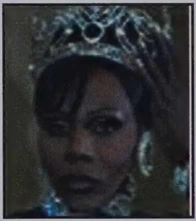
Current Title Holders Of Some Of The Nation's Leading Gay Pageants

The Royal Court

Clikque Magazine salutes the current title holders of some of the most prestigious pageantry systems in our community. By being listed here, know that you are among the best talent that our community has to offer. Some day your name will be listed among our nations elite such as Terrilyn Foxx, Stasha Sanchez, Monte St. James, Tim Bohar, Arche Bonet, Jasmine Bonet, Paris Frantz, Raquel Lorde, Joe Jackson, Tommie Ross, Alecia Kelly, Chevelle Brooks, Sasha Valentino, Chanel Necole, Niesha Dupree, and Cliqkue's former cover Goddess Necole Luv Dupree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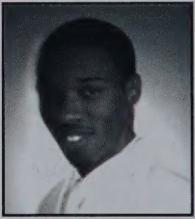
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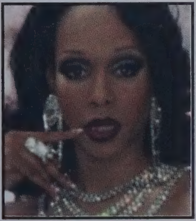
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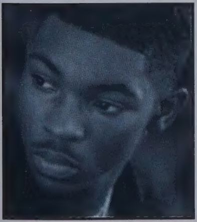
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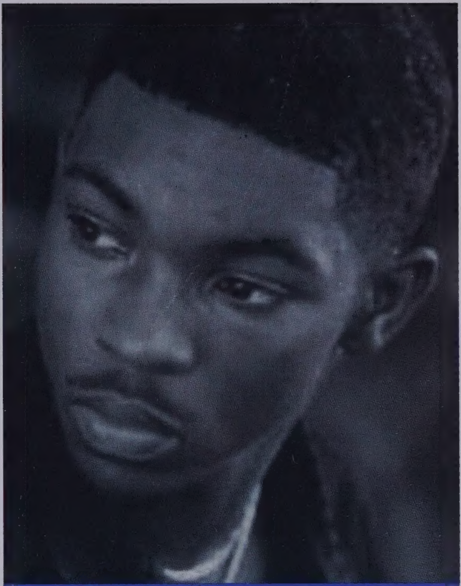

In Our Spotlight this month is 20 year old Ke'Ante Bonet from Jacksonville, Florida. Although a new comer to the world of male pageants and entertainment , Ke'Ante as the reigning Mr. Black America New Comer is already showing promising signs of being one of the top at his craft.

Singing, dancing, drawing, creating websites and props are some of the hobbies of this stud who says that his Mentors and Role Models are Maria Hendricks & Gerald "Jalese" Neil.

His favorite Male Entertainers are Romeo St. James, Alphonse Dupree, Al Milan Dupree, Ronnie Davis, & Christopher Iman.

Favorite Female Entertainers are Jasmine Bone't, Stasha Sanchez, Angelica "Piggy" Sanchez, Evelyn Sanchez, Tatianna & Racquell Devine Roberts

"Life is short", says Ke'Ante and suggests that we Live now and worry later.

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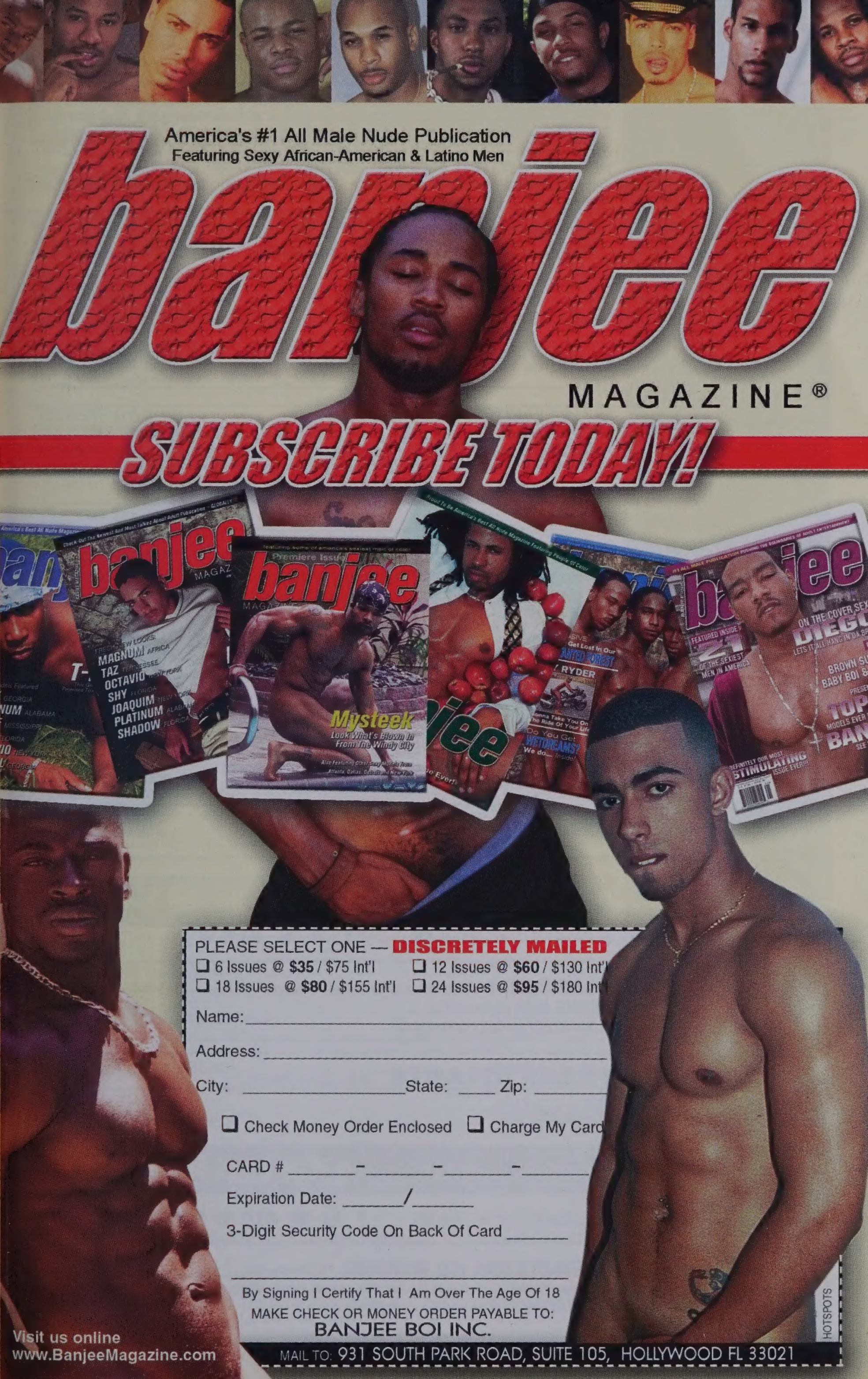

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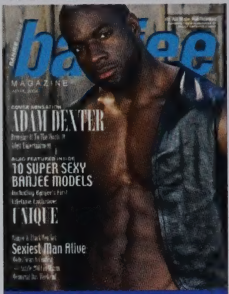

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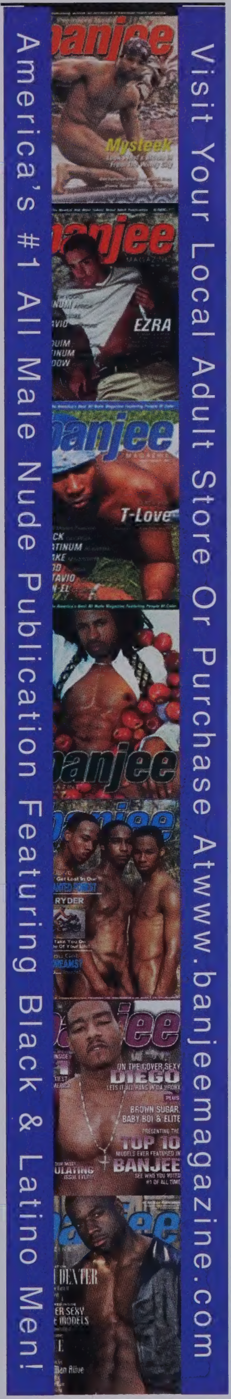
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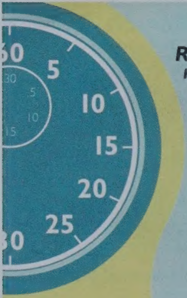

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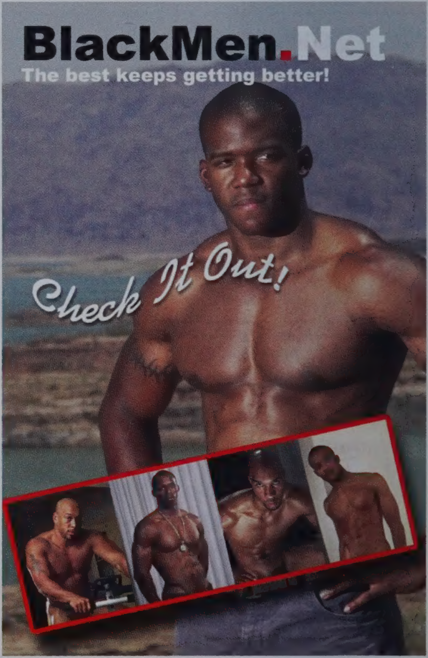
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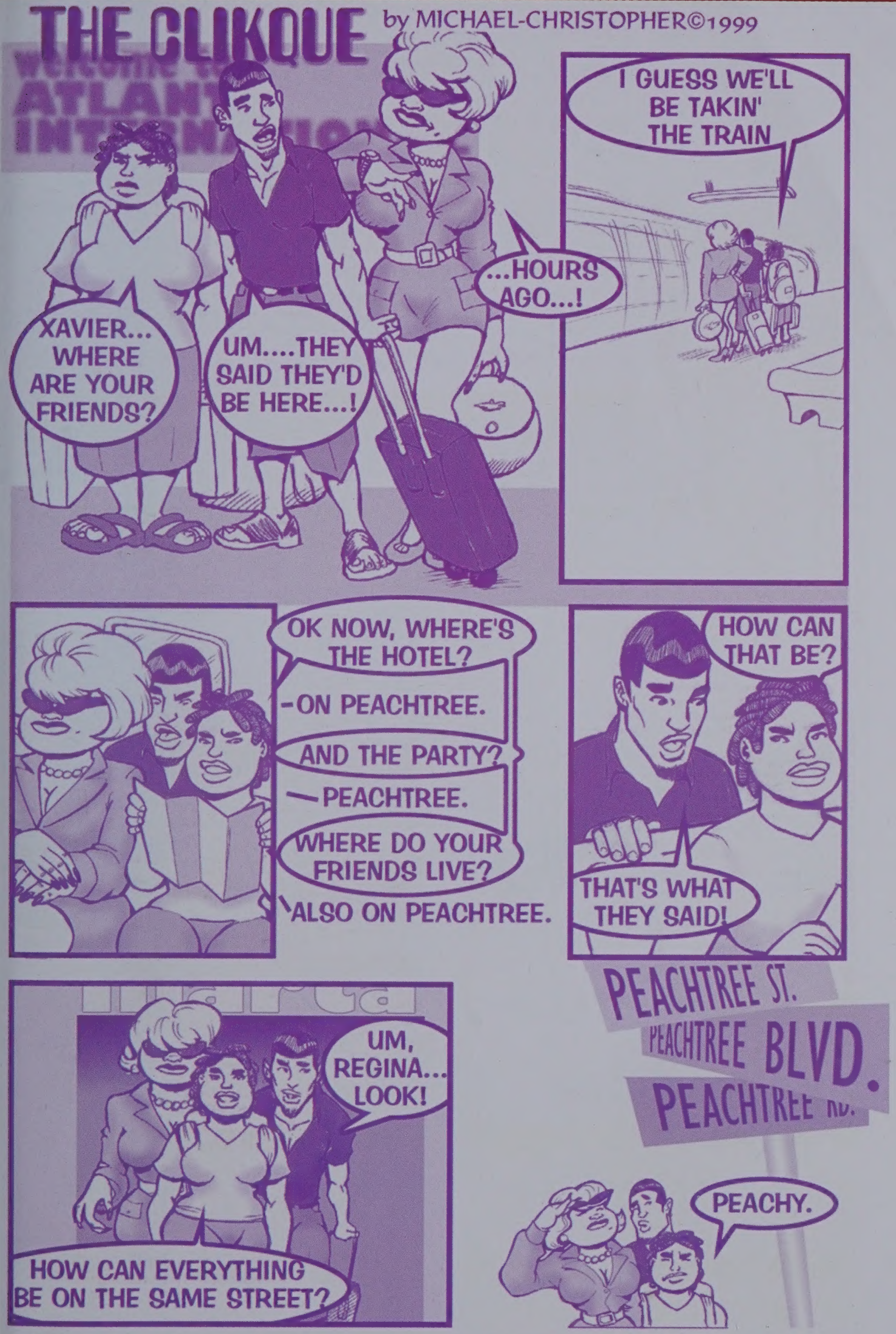
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—PEACHTREE.
WHERE DO YOUR FRIENDS LIVE?
ALSO ON PEACHTREE.
HOW CAN THAT BE?
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID!
marta
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TAXATION
- they could never file jointly and he couldn't claim his daughter by law.

HOSPITAL VISITATION
- right up to the end, he had to fight his way into the room every time.

INHERITANCE
- his partner's estate will be taxed by the federal government from dollar one.

IMMIGRATION
- if his loved one was from a foreign land, their years of commitment would have provided no basis to live on U.S. soil.

SOCIAL SECURITY
- he can't collect survivor benefits, even though his partner worked his whole life.

HEALTH BENEFITS (COBRA)
- his employer had domestic partner health benefits, but they don't extend under COBRA.

MARRIAGE
- they never had the right to marry - not in any state. After more than twenty years and a child together, they had fewer protections than a couple married for one hour.

MILITARY PENSION & ERISA
- his partner served in the Gulf War, but he doesn't qualify for pension benefits from the military or even his employer.

Through professional and passionate advocacy, and educational programs like HRC FamilyNet and HRC WorkNet, the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay and lesbian advocacy organization, is working to bring about equal benefits and protections for every GLBT family. Please support these efforts. To learn more, visit the websites below.

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Talking A Stance On Our Issues

Darryl LC Moch
Sr. Staff Writer

Welcome to the world of Clikque. We appreciate your encouragement and support. The response to our last edition was tremendous and we will continue to bring to you the latest and greatest of our community. With the current economy, Presidential elections coming, and the relentless attack on our human rights, civil rights, and rights as same gender loving people to enjoy the same benefits and rights as other Americans we must get involved. Clikque will stay in top of the tide of change and we will advocate for positive change.

African American women and SGL men continue to be infected with HIV in alarming rates, women's right to choose is being attacked, and the voting rights act (giving "Negroes" the right to vote) will have to be reauthorized. Do you realize that your right to vote is not guaranteed?! It can be taken away if the Congress does not reauthorize that act. The most basic right for Americans is not secure, for US, constitutionally.

As SGL people we still have to fight for our children, our homes, and respect within the community. We cannot sit back and let someone else decide for us what is important. We've got to get involved. Get involved in your local, state, regional, and national political movements. We cannot tell you what to believe or what to fight for, but we are encouraging you to stand up for something. "Stand Up and Represent."

Clikque will continue to be a source of information and encouragement. But don't let yourselves down. "Ain't gonna' let nobody turn us around." We cannot let anyone separate us, divide our power, or confuse the issues. Right now our fight is for the right to BE exactly who we are, as we are, because we are created right, natural, and normal. We have to stand for the rights of our Transgender brothers and sisters, our children, and our seniors. Every issue facing our nation is our issue. Don't be distracted by rhetoric.

How do you want to live your life? Remember the days of shame and hiding. The times when we couldn't see any images of ourselves on tv or in the movies (while positive Black images are still lacking) we are moving in a better direction. Remember the fear of being fired because you were gay or lesbian? How about not being able to get hired because you were transgender? Remember the days of sex in parks and secret places and you were not even safe to love in the privacy of your own home?

It's really up to you. Your one vote does count. Your $ contribution to a campaign can help. You- volunteering and fighting for a cause you believe in is important. You are relevant. Clikque will continue to bring you the issues most relevant to our lives. *We encourage you to write us and tell us what's on your mind; support us, as we support you. Clikque is here for you.*

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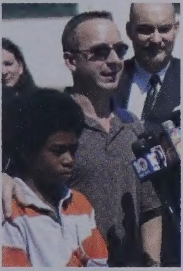
FLORIDA COURTS OKs GAY ADOPTION BAN

Plaintiffs 'surprised by hostility' of federal appeals court ruling

After deliberating for almost a year, a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled unanimously Wednesday that the state of Florida can legally bar "practicing homosexuals" from adopting children.

In a case brought by three gay families, the Atlanta-based federal appeals court held that adoption is a privilege granted by a state, invalidating the plaintiffs' claims that their constitutional rights to equal protection and due process were violated.


Doug Houghton (center) and his 11-year-old son Oscar were represented by ACLU attorney Matt Coles (far right) in a case challenging Florida's ban on gay adoptions. The Atlanta-based 11th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the ban in a ruling this week. (Photo by Yesikka Vivancos/AP

"The state of Florida has made the determination that it is not in the best interests of its displaced children to be adopted by individuals who 'engage in current, voluntary homosexual activity' and we have found nothing in the Constitution that forbids this policy judgment," Judge Stanley Birch wrote in the panel's decision.

Birch was joined on the panel by Judge Edward Carnes of Alabama; both men were appointed to the 11th Circuit by President George H.W. Bush. A third judge on the panel, Proctor Hug, Jr., was appointed to the 9th Circuit Appeals Court in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter.

Officials with the American Civil Liberties Union, which represented the prospective gay parents, called the ruling "deeply disappointing."

"We think the court is wrong in believing that government can continue to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation after the Supreme Court's decision in Lawrence v. Texas last summer," Matt Coles, director of the ACLU's Lesbian & Gay Rights Project, said in a written statement.

"We think the court is wrong in thinking that the Constitution lets the government assume that sexual orientation has anything to do with good parenting," Coles said.

Officials with the state of Florida could not immediately be reached for comment on the case, known as Lofton v. Kearney, while conservative groups quickly lauded the decision.

"In this age of judicial activism, it is refreshing to see a court assume its proper role and allow the people to set family policy," Mathew Staver, president of Liberty Counsel, an Orlando-based group that filed a brief supporting the ban, told the Associated Press.

15 states debate marriage

Gay GOP group blames flurry of anti-gay measures on Bush's State of the Union address

In the aftermath of President Bush's State of the Union address, in which he strongly hinted at support of a constitutional amendment on gay marriage, 15 state legislatures around the country have begun debating sweeping bans on recognition of gay unions, while a smaller number of states are weighing pro-gay measures aimed at stopping the rush to amend.

A bill blocking state recognition of gay marriage and barring state workers from receiving partner benefits passed the Ohio Senate last week and is likely to be signed by the state's Republican governor. Meanwhile, legislators in Indiana and Arizona succeeded in blocking bills that sought to amend their state constitutions to ban same-sex marriage.

While the Ohio bill is intended to prevent the state from recognizing a gay marriage performed in another state, the bill strongly notes, "specific statutory benefits of marriage" are against the "strong public policy of the state."

State Sen. C.J. Prentiss (D-Cleveland), who voted against the measure, called the bill "the most draconian violation of many rights" and tried to add a bereavement amendment to the measure at the last minute that was eventually tabled.

"Since I believe that everyone is human, has a heart, can cry, I thought my colleagues would have said 'yes' to the bereavement bill and not expose their homophobic feelings, but I was wrong," Prentiss said.

The controversial measure, House Bill 272, dubbed the Defense of Marriage Act by supporters and the Denial of Benefits Act by opponents, has Ohio lead-

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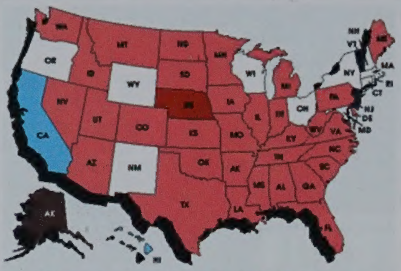


State of gay unions in the states

- ■ 2 states (VT, NJ) and DC recognize civil unions or domestic partnerships and don't have a DOMA law
- 🟦 2 states (CA, HI) offer limited legal recognition to gay couples. But California voters passed a 2000 initiative limiting marriage to heterosexual couples; Hawaii passed a state constitutional amendment limiting marriage to heterosexual couples
- □ 11 states have not passed any law concerning same-sex couples
- 🟥 33 States have passed DOMA laws restricting marriage to heterosexual couples and have no other laws addressing same-sex couples
- 🟥 1 state (NE) has passed a "Super DOMA," which bans domestic partner benefits to gay couples in addition to defining marriage for heterosexual couples only*
- ■ 1 state (AK) has passed a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage and offers no other form of recognition to gay couples

*Ohio is on the verge of passing a "Super DOMA" that would also restrict domestic partner benefits to state employees.

Sources: Human Rights Campaign and National Gay & Lesbian Task Force

ers divided.

Auditor Betty Montgomery, a moderate Republican who wants to be Ohio's next governor in 2006 supports the state's new measure while Attorney General Jim Petro, another Republican gubernatorial contender, opposes the bill calling it "a little too broad" adding that "binding unions" between gay couples should be afforded some protections.

"I don't think it should be against the strong public policy of the state to show respect and a little bit of tolerance for all people, and that may include people who make a strong commitment to one another and who happen to be of the same gender," Petro told the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Petro did not return Blade calls seeking comment.

Orest Holubec, a spokesperson for Republican Gov. Bob Taft, said the governor is prepared to sign the measure into law.

Prentiss noted that the private sector is expressing concern that one of the country's most far-reaching gay marriage bans could hurt their bottom line.

Patrick Guerriero, executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, strongly condemned the actions taken by the Ohio Legislature and again criticized Bush's State of the Union remarks in which the Republican president assailed "activist judges."

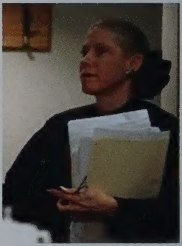
"I think more damaging than the exact wording, was the signal [the president's remarks] sent to legislators around the country," Guerriero said. "We knew that legislative leaders had been holding back from pushing forward with any legislation and sadly, within hours of the president's speech, we saw the most onerous of them pass the Ohio Senate.

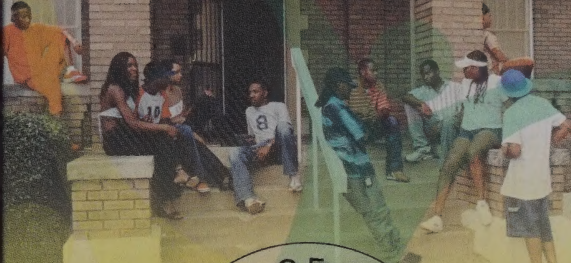
"We now have places like Ohio turning back the clock not just on gay marriage but on basic civil rights for gay and lesbian Americans."

When signed by Gov. Taft, Ohio will become the 38th state to pass some sort of DOMA measure.

Florida court says gay man ENTRAPPED BY GOOD-LOOKING DETECTIVE

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — A ruling that a detective was too good looking for a gay suspect to be charged in an undercover drug sting has been upheld by an appeals court. The Fourth District Court of Appeals agreed with Broward Circuit Judge Susan Lebow's decision that Julio Blanco thought the undercover officer might have been looking for a sexual relationship — not drugs — when he asked whether the defendant liked to "party." Blanco, 37, who described himself as a lonely gay man, said that he understood "party" to mean having a good time or being sexually involved. According to court records, Fort Lauderdale police Detective Mike Nahum, working with a Drug Enforcement Administration team, followed up with several requests for cocaine. Blanco refused three times and even tried to leave, but was ultimately convinced to stay and later bought some methamphetamines from the officer. The appeals court agreed that Blanco had been entrapped by "non-verbal communication used" by the undercover agent.





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Dwight Powell
Editor-In-Chief

They Are Out To Take Our Black Babies!

The first wave of primaries, for the national elections being held this year, have passed and the "pretenders to the throne" (Presidency) are falling quicker than the Dow Jones was a few years ago. Apparently, the Democrats are down to a two horse race at the time of this article: Ted Kennedy's protege - Senator John Kerry and the multimillionaire Barrister from North Carolina - Senator John Edwards. A lot of Democrats have been seen; recently, dancing in the streets and salivating at the chops with the hope that Mr. Kennedy's protege will be able to "beat Bush." Rumor has it that Black folks, all across America, are storming various sheet music stores and bushing up on that old Democratic Anthem: "Happy Days Are Here Again." For those of us at "ground zero" (Black Gay, bisexual, MSM and transgender males) of America's burgeoning AIDS crisis this election is of grave importance. Due to the unrelenting refusal of Black Gay men, etc., and Black people period, to cough up their private dollars to support their local organizations in this never ending battle against the AIDS virus, we (Black AIDS Service Organizations) have been left at the mercy of government funds and the million and one strings attached to such monies. Brothers and sisters, it's an old golden rule in a capitalist nation: "he who has the gold rules." When it comes to dollars to fight AIDS, we might be dancing to the music but we are not members of the band playing the song.

When our people finish their premature rejoicing over Mr. Kennedy's protege winning the Democratic primaries, it might be wise to listen to who is talking about stemming the AIDS crisis among Black people (never forget: Black Gay men, etc., are at "ground zero" - which means our dead bodies continue to stack up like so much cord wood). The only political White folks I've heard recently talking about AIDS and Black folks are Mr. Bush and the Republicans. It seems that when it comes to Gay people the number one concern of the Democrats is legalizing White Gays and Lesbians getting married. Point of fact is: White Gays and Lesbians seem that they couldn't care less about Black folks and AIDS, especially us brothers here at "ground zero" of the epidemic. Their number one political agenda is for them to get their marriages legalized.

My Black Gay and Lesbian brothers and sisters, let us not kid ourselves. There is a world of difference between Black and White Gay and Lesbian America. They are not one and the same and when anything concerning Gays and Lesbians is discussed in the national, statewide or local media, 99.9% of the time, it is White folks doing the talking. There is no social, political or economic reciprocity by White Gay America to any part of Black America, especially, Black Gays and Lesbians. For years we have gone and spent our hard earned dollars in the White Gay Communities all across America yet they never return the favor by spending their dollars in our communities unless they are copping some trade or dope. These are the facts, as unpleasant as they may be; the truth is the truth. One of the reasons that Clikque Magazine has had such a hard time staying afloat is the lack of social, political and economic reciproci-

Mr. Don Sneed is a senior staff writer fo Cliqkue Magazine. As Agency Director of Renaissance III in Dallas, Texas, Mr. Sneed has been a pillar in our community fighting the spread of HIV and AIDS. In January of 2003 Mr. Sneed was sworn in by Claude Allen, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, to serve a four-year term on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA).

ty on the part of White Gay and Lesbian America. They won't even advertise in this magazine to the extent of the dollars that we spend with them on a regular basis warrants. That is why in most every city, throughout America, the White Gay clubs still have a "Black Folks Night."

It was recently said to me, by some White Gay men, that when it comes to the Democratic Party, Black people's votes don't matter anymore because White Gays and Lesbians can out vote us any day of the week. It appears that the real {our beloved and paid for in blood, toil, sweat and tears} civil rights movement has been co-opted by the White Gay and Lesbian community and their becoming legally married is at the top of their social, political and economic civil rights agenda. What about us Black Brothers, Sisters and Children infected with and dying from AIDS and all of the other hellish social, economic and political ills that affects us? As usual, when it comes to us Black Gays, Lesbians, etc., we're left to fend for ourselves until the next "Black Folks Night" at the White Gay Club. My viewpoint, regarding Gays and Lesbians, of any ethnicity, getting married is this: "Marriage should remain within the restrictions constructed by God; only a man and a woman can procreate (make babies). Artificial insemination of Lesbians does not fall within that parameter. Please understand that the adoptions, that will ensue following the legalization of marriage for White Gays and Lesbians, will be Black children. Such a fate for our innocent Black children does not sit well with me nor should it with any Black person in this nation. Let us learn to take care of our own without having to turn our babies over to others for parenting, mentoring, guidance and whatever else they may be transformed into, under such circumstances. We don't need any more Michael Jackson(s) like the one in that mug shot.

The Rebuttal

Greetings Don,

I am always intrigued by your words of wisdom. Thank you for sharing your thoughts about the plight of our people, especially black gays and lesbians. I do not hear enough about our social and political strife in America. And I agree with you that white gays and lesbians are not necessarily on our side which is no different from their heterosexual counterparts. I have always told my superiors that we need to get money from our community to do any real work in the

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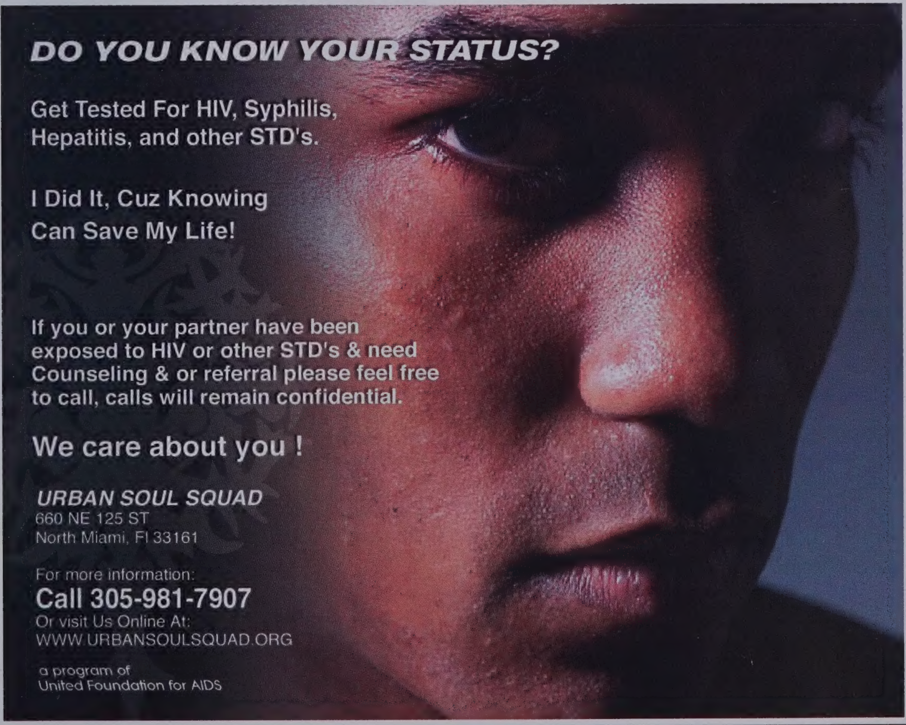
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By Lorenzo Herman

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

black community in fighting this virus. Last year, we lost several state funded programs because our organizations didn't know how to play the white man's game in the HIV business. That served as wake up call to my black community based organization.

In regards to the issue of legalizing gay marriage is another factor. I respect your spiritual path to a higher calling but I disagree that God constructed the restrictions to marriage between a man and woman. Most ancient societies needed a secure environment for the perpetuation of the species,a system of rules to handle the granting of property rights, and the protection of bloodlines. The institution of marriage handled these needs. For instance, ancient Hebrew law required a man to become the husband of a deceased brother's widow. Hebrew law had several definitions of what constituted a marriage which had a lot to do with the social order marked by considerable political and economic inequalities. Examples of these can be found in Exodus 22:16-17, Deuteronomy 22, Genesis 22 and 34, 1 Samuel 18, and 1 Kings 11 just to name a few. Monogamy was more of a reaction to social norms because most men could not afford to support more than one family in ancient Egypt and during the early Christian church.

Although most of us today would agree that marriage is consentual between two people who are in love was not always the tradition of the Christian church. Joseph Campbell, in the Power of Myth, mentions that the Twelfth century troubadours were the first ones who thought of courtly love in the same way we do now. The whole notion of romance apparently didn't exist until medieval times, and the troubadours. The statement of Pope Nicholas I in which he declared in 866, "If the consent be lacking in a marriage, all other celebrations, even should the union be consummated, are rendered void", shows the importance of a couple's consent to marriage. It has remained an important part of church teaching through the years.

Throughout human history, marriages were made for economic reasons and those unions were sometimes recognized in religious ceremonies. That concept has not really changed much at all. Heterosexual marriages has its economic privileges in this country and many other places. My brother and his wife were together for 7 years before they got legally married. They would have been content to remain "common law" married but their chosen union was economically infeasible for tax purposes and raising their sons, so they got legally married before God. When I was studying theology in my Catholic high school and university, the argument for silencing gays and treating them as invisible children of God, was because we cannot procreate. Marriage is for procreation, which comes from St. Augustine's philosophy that men and women should not enjoy sex because it is a vehicle for propagating the Earth. Even at the age of 16 when I read such materials by these revered theologians, I thought about the millions of men and women around the world who are either born sterile or cannot have children for other biological reason and they could not be married under the religious constraints of God. The argument still does not make any sense to me at the age of 30. God gave us of the power of reason and to use our brains. Some things that I hear from the pulpit just don't make any intellectual or common sense and the procreation argument to justify treating gays and lesbian like lepers and shut us out of economic equality is another one.

I don't know too much about the other cities adoption policies. But in San Diego county, black children make up 80% of children in the foster care system. Most of them never get adopted because there are not enough black families in the foster care system and black children are not desired by white folks. So the idea that white gays and lesbians will use legal marriage to take our black children away from us, don't add up here in San Diego county. That is highly unlikely to happen. Maybe in Texas but I don't know about Texas.

Respectfully yours,

Lorenzo Herman

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By SUSAN BELL, MD

Doctor's File (Questions for her)

I have been celibate going on four years. This is something I choose for myself personally. I masturbate very often to compensate for it. My friends and family are amazed with my decision. I have decided to hold off on sex until I can find that special someone who shares both my values and morals. I think about it a lot and even more when my period is approaching. I love sex as much as the next girl. Yet I have never achieved an orgasm with anyone except with myself. My question to you is: When I find a partner that I want to become sexually involved with, do you think the constant masturbation will subside? Will they please me as fully as I do myself? Overall, are there any side effects to long-term masturbation?

It seems to me that finding a partner is finding someone to whom you are emotionally, physically, and sexually attracted. Of course you are going to know your own body best, but people are different and your future partner may be able to show you some things that might enhance your sexual enjoyment. And of course there is the incalculable benefit of being with someone who turns you on. That alone can leave any masturbatory sexual gratification in the dust. On the other hand, maybe your partner will be inexperienced and you will have to guide how things go. You may likely also continue to masturbate once you have a partner. All are possibilities. It's finding the right partner that is the hard part.

I was making out with a girl I met in a club a few months ago, and the next day I had a cold sore on the inside of my lower lip. I was wondering if getting cold sores after making out with someone is an indication that that person has herpes and either does not know it or did not say so.

Herpes takes five to seven days after exposure to develop a sore, so it isn't the girl in the club last night who gave it to you. It could have been the girl in the club the prior week. You may have already had herpes and just not known it (and could have given it to the girl in the club). Fully 80% of people with herpes simplex do not know that they have it. Some don't realize that "fever blisters" or "sun blisters" are, in fact, herpes. A blood test for the presence of herpes antibody will tell you. If you have antibodies to HSV I (herpes simplex virus I) you will have fewer recurrences than if you have HSV II. Many people have more outbreaks when they are young, and the frequency tapers off as they get older. Many HSV carriers have no symptoms, which is what makes it so easy to transmit. Just make sure to avoid intimate contact when you have an outbreak; this is when the virus is most infectious. If you do have frequent outbreaks, you can take suppressive medication which will help reduce their frequency, severity, and duration.

I recently had an endocervical polyp removed and wanted to know if using older rubber-jelly-based sex toys will affect any polyp regrowth.

The answer is no. Endocervical polyps are spontaneous and are not influenced by anything that we know of in terms of their occurrence. It is easy to remove one incompletely, however. In this case they may recur or persist, but it isn't related to the sex toys. Make sure you clean your sex toys adequately as they can transmit lots of other things if they aren't taken care of.

I know you probably don't have a real answer for this, but I thought I would try. My girlfriend and I have been together for six months now and we have a good sex life, but there is one thing missing: She won't eat me out. She is disgusted by the idea. I have tried talking to her about it to reassure her it is not that bad, but it didn't work. She is not new to the idea, though, because she has done it to a few other people, but she said that they forced her to do it. I love her, so I don't want to put her through that again. But I really want her to. Is there any thing I can do to make her more comfortable with the idea?

That is such a gross expression, "eat me out." Yikes! Maybe if you refer to it in a different way, your girlfriend won't be disgusted by the idea.

Doctor's File (Questions for him)

I am a man and I masturbate once per day. Is this harmful? Thanks in advance.

There is no harm in masturbating once a day. It is perfectly healthy. Masturbation is good for your prostate and it can prevent painful prostate blockage. In addition, it can help relieve stress. Enjoy.

How can I hide my hickey?
My main boyfriend gave me a pretty big hickey on my neck and I don't want my other boyfiends to see it and start asking questions. Is there any way to get rid of it quickly or am I going to have to wear a turtleneck or scarf in the middle of summer?

The best way to get rid of a hickey is to cover it with makeup that matches your skin tone. There is something called a "blemish eraser" which might help cover it over. A hickey is actually blood that gets trapped in the skin after it is sucked out of the capillaries by your boyfriend going to town on your neck. It takes time for the body to reabsorb this blood. It is not dangerous, but it does leave a mark. You can also try putting a warm, wet washcloth against the spot and see if that helps speed up the process. Good luck.

I was in a nine-year monogamous relationship in which I typically did not have trouble achieving or maintaining erections or ejaculating. I have been single for eight years now. In the past couple of years I have progressively had more and more difficulty achieving and maintaining erections with partners. I can not link it to any particular characteristic of the men themselves, nor can my doctor find a cause for this since it is possible for me to masturbate to climax. I do find however that it takes a rougher approach in handling myself to become aroused and ultimately cum. I also have been on depression medication periodically, though none of what I am on currently lists erectile dysfunction as a side effect. I am despondent about this problem because it destroyed my last relationship of six months, and is keeping me from seeking out sexual experiences with others! It is recurrent and consistent. I am also afraid that I am desensitized to a point where I will need to seek out more of the rough trade or fetish subcultures which I find always include behaviors like golden showers, swallowing pee, or piercing (which I am not into). When I have told guys to be rough they either don't do it right, or are put off. I just want to have a normal sex life, no kinky bullshit. I feel I have no hope.

First of all, don't give up. It sounds from your letter like you are depressed and depression can certainly interfere with sexual satisfaction. Antidepressants usually don't hamper an erection, but instead keep you from reaching an orgasm. If you are on medication now, this could be the problem. If you are not on medication you might need something to alleviate your depression.

While it may sound like I am giving you contradictory advice, depression and its treatment can be very complicated, especially where sexual gratification is involved. I urge you to talk with a psychiatrist about this.

I also want to reassure you that needing rougher pressure to bring yourself to an orgasm does not mean that you have to seek out "rough trade" or "fetish subcultures". All you need is an understanding partner. If you can bring someone to a climax in a way that they like, why shouldn't you expect the same in return? Many men like a firm touch. You should try bringing yourself to the brink of an orgasm and then let your partner finish the job.

This might help you get used to different techniques and stimuli. I don't think asking to be aroused with a firm grip is enough to destroy a relationship and I suspect there were many other issues at hand.

I hope you will work on this problem. It won't be easy and will need time and patience on both your part and the part of an understanding partner. Therapy will also probably help. Please don't feel despondent.

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There are several court cases and recent legislative actions that have brought tremendous public attention to the fight for civil marriage equality for same-sex couples. On Nov. 18, 2003, Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to deny same-sex couples the right to a civil marriage, after arguments by the Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) on behalf of seven couples seeking the right to civil marriage. The court's decision in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health (SJC-08860), which extends full and equal marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples and bisexual couples in same-sex relationships in the state of Massachusetts, has been stayed, allowing the Mass. legislature time to 'fix' state law to bring it in line with the constitution.

In November, a judge in New Jersey dismissed a suit by seven gay couples that were denied marriage licenses. The ruling in Lewis v. Harris found no fundamental right to same-sex marriage under state or federal law. Lambda Legal is appealing the decision.

In addition to these court cases, in September, California Governor Gray Davis signed into law AB 205, a bill passed by the California Assembly that grants domestic partners many of the rights that California state law affords to married couples. These protections include custody provisions and child support obligations, authority to make decisions regarding funeral arrangements and community property, as well as mutual responsibility for debts and joint assessment of income for determining eligibility for state government assistance programs.

These events have prompted religious conservatives and other opponents of civil marriage equality to stage several attacks on gay and lesbian civil rights. In May, Representative Marilyn Musgrove (R-Colo.) introduced the Federal Marriage Amendment into Congress. The legislation would amend the constitution to legally define marriage as a "union between a man and a

woman." In addition to the Federal Marriage Amendment, in October, the Family Research Council and other anti-gay groups sponsored "Marriage Protection Week," an event intended to garner publicity and support for their efforts to deny marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples.

Since last month's historic U.S. Supreme Court decision in Lawrence v. Texas, issues surrounding equal marriage rights for gay, lesbian and bisexual couples have received quality, widespread media coverage. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health will doubtless result in strong reactions from same-sex couples impacted by the decision, LGBT and allied civil rights groups, and people and organizations opposed to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality.

CIVIL MARRIAGE, CIVIL UNIONS & DOMESTIC PARTNER PROTECTIONS IN THE U.S.

As of July 13, 2003, no U.S. state allows same-sex couples to marry. However, three states -- Hawaii, California and Connecticut -- and the District of Columbia do confer upon same-sex couples a limited number of legal protections. California, Hawaii and the District of Columbia have official state/district registries for same-sex couples; and California AB 205 (passed 41-29 by the state Assembly on June 4 and currently being considered by the Senate) would expand existing, limited domestic partner rights to include child custody, financial duties to children, public assistance, transfer of property, tax exemptions, organ donations and burial. Connecticut, while it extends limited legal protections to gay couples, does not allow them to register their commitments.

Only one state -- Vermont -- has enacted civil unions, which extend all of the state benefits and protections of marriage (though none of the federal ones) to same-sex couples.

EQUAL MARRIAGE RIGHTS IN CANADA

On June 10, 2003, the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that Canada's ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional, violating gay couples' equality rights under the Canadian Constitution's Charter of Rights. On June 17, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced he would not appeal the ruling and his cabinet enacted a national policy recognizing same-sex marriage, making Canada the third country after the Netherlands and Belgium to extend marriage to gay couples. On June 13, a coalition of LGBT legal groups (including GLAD, Lambda Legal, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project and Freedom to Marry) issued a joint advisory informing U.S. couples of their right to marry in Canada and advising them on the legal issues and challenges they may face when they return to and attempt to see their marriage recognized in the United States. For more information, read "Joint Advisory: Thinking of Getting Married in Canada?"

FEDERAL & STATE ANTI-GAY MARRIAGE LAWS ("DOMA")

In 1996, President Clinton signed a law designed to restrict the ability of same-sex couples to have their relationships recognized at the state and federal levels. Known as "DOMA," this so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" defines marriage as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife," and bars same-sex couples from receiving any of the federal protections afforded married couples, including but not limited to: Social Security, Medicare, family leave, health care, disability, military and many other federal benefits. This anti-gay marriage legislation also opened the door for states to pass laws that deny recognition of same-sex couples' civil marriages from other states.

To date 37 states have passed similar laws, although only three -- Alaska, California and Nevada -- have done so through popular vote. All other anti-gay marriage laws have been enacted by state legislatures. Thus far, the constitutionality of the federal DOMA has not been challenged, although many believe it violates Article IV, Section 1 -- the "full faith and credit clause" -- of the U.S. Constitution.

FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

There is a movement afoot to amend the U.S. Constitution to bar states from recognizing same-sex marriage or any union which extends the protections, rights and responsibilities of marriage to same-sex couples. The Federal Marriage Amendment is designed not only to write discrimination against same-sex couples into the U.S. Constitution, but also to undo existing state, county and city protections for gay and lesbian couples and families.

BY DEB PRICE / THE DETROIT NEWS

Black Supporters Of Gays Ignored

Something's been wrong with the picture of gay America: It's been way too white for way too long.

That distorted image has had damaging consequences: Seeing so many white faces accompanying gay stories, many heterosexual African-Americans understandably equate being gay with being white. Sensing discomfort and disapproval in their families and churches, many black gay men and lesbians stay closeted, both from those they love dearly and the media.

Meanwhile, mostly white right-wing groups have effectively showcased well-known African-Americans who oppose gay equality.

The result of all this?

Americans are much more likely to know that Colin Powell opposed allowing gays to serve openly in the military than to know that supporters of gay marriage include such prominent African-Americans as Coretta Scott King, Congressman John Lewis, former Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders, actress Whoppi Goldberg, Democratic presidential hopefuls Al Sharpton and Carol Moseley Braun, and the Rev. William Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist denomination.

And probably few heterosexuals of any race realize the key role that gay African-Americans are playing in the legal struggle for equal rights for those of us who're gay.

Last summer, when the Supreme Court handed gay Americans our biggest victory ever, African-American Tyron Garner and his white partner made history for successfully challenging their arrest for private, romantic intimacy.

And as the recent Massachusetts ruling that marriage licenses must be given to gay couples beginning next May demonstrated, black gays are central to the drive to allow gay couples to marry in this country. That ruling grew out of a suit filed by seven couples, two of them black-white unions. And in New Jersey, a black lesbian couple is among the couples fighting to wed.

Yet the fact that gay America is every color rarely gets broadcast.

"When 99 percent of the time the image they see about gay rights is a white face, black heterosexuals will go, 'It is not a black issue.' Yet we who are black and gay know just how important being able to marry is to our relationships," says North Carolina activist Mandy Carter.

Now, valiantly countering the effort to drum up support in the black community to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban gay marriages, a black gay group is working to improve the picture. The new National Black Justice Coalition plans to seek allies in black churches, reach out through the black media and talk at leading black conferences to stress how such a ban would hurt black same-sex families.

"When we talk about marriage equality as a civil rights issue, the African-American community can be an ally," says gay African-American Keith Boykin, a former aide to President Clinton and with Carter is a founder of the Justice Coalition. "It's a question of framing the issue."

Polling illustrates the coalition's uphill road: Blacks are more likely than whites to think sexual orientation "can be changed" (58 percent versus 39 percent in a Pew Research Center poll in November) and to think gay sex should be illegal (64 versus 48 percent in a December New York Times poll). On gay marriage, survey results are mixed, with Pew finding 60 percent of both blacks and whites opposed, but the Times reporting much more black opposition (75 versus 59 percent).

Gary Daffin, co-chair of a leading Massachusetts gay group, says persuading fellow black gays to be out in the black community is central to changing hearts.

"Gay and lesbian people of color have to show the courage that our ancestors showed in fighting racism and segregation," Daffin says. "What changed history was people saying, 'We are going to put our lives on the line because we don't want our children to live like this.' We don't want the next generation of black gay kids to have to hide."

You can reach Deb Price at (202) 906-8205 or dprice@detnews.com.

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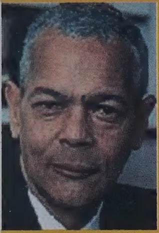
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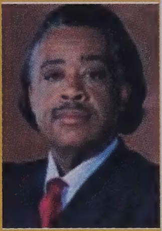
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Timeline On Blacks and Marriage Equality

1724: Article VIII of the Louisiana Black Code forbids marriages between slaves without the consent of the slave master.

1865: Section 3 of the Mississippi Black Code prohibits blacks from marrying whites "and any person who shall so intermarry shall be deemed guilty of felony, and on conviction thereof shall be confined in the State penitentiary for life."

Oct. 1, 1948: In Perez v. Sharp, the California Supreme Court becomes the first state court to strike down laws against interracial marriage.

Jun. 12, 1967: In Loving v. Virginia, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down laws that prohibited interracial marriage.

July 12, 1996: The U.S. House of Representatives passes the "Defense of Marriage Act."

Jun. 26, 2003: In Lawrence v. Texas, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down anti-gay sodomy laws in Texas and other states.

Oct. 25, 2003: Rep. John Lewis, writing in an op-ed in the Boston Globe, calls for an end to discrimination in marriage.

Nov. 18, 2003: In Goodridge v. Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court holds that barring an individual from the protections, benefits, and obligations of civil marriage solely because that person would marry a person of the same sex violates the Massachusetts Constitution.

Nov. 18, 2003: Rev. William Sinkford, a black minister and president of the Unitarian Universalist Church, applauds the decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

Nov. 24, 2003: Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun states her support for marriage equality during the presidential candidates' debate in Des Moines, Iowa.

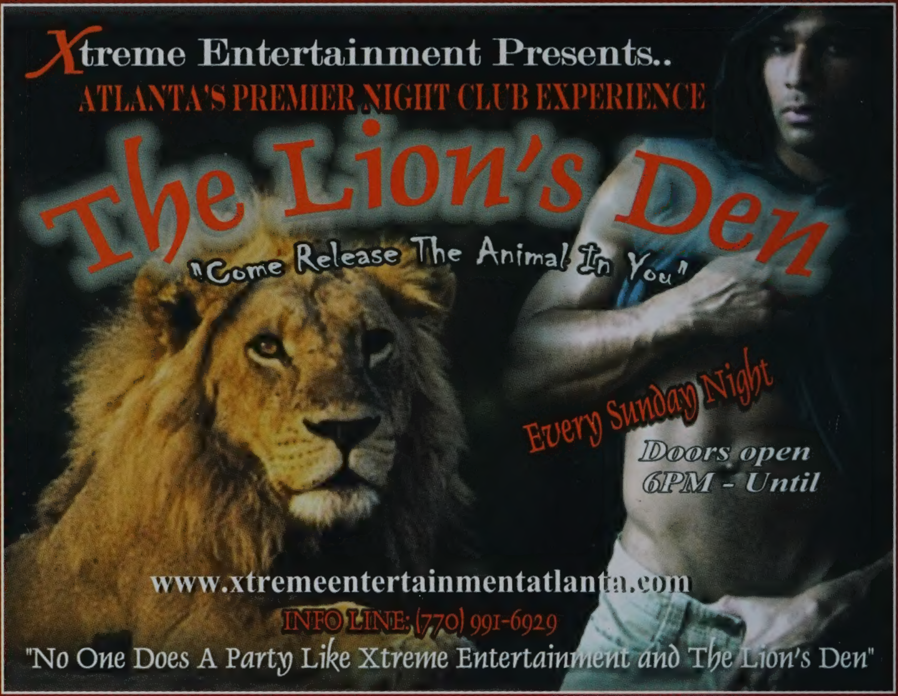
Nov. 24, 2003: Rev. Al Sharpton states his support for marriage equality during the presidential candidates' debate in Des Moines, Iowa.

Nov. 25, 2003: Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) and four co-sponsors introduce an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to deny marriage rights for same-sex couples.

Dec. 8, 2003: The National Black Justice Coalition announces a campaign to build black support for marriage equality.

Feb. 2, 2004: Civil rights leader Julian Bond announces his support for marriage equality.

Source: National Black Justice Coalition (www.nbjcoalition.org)



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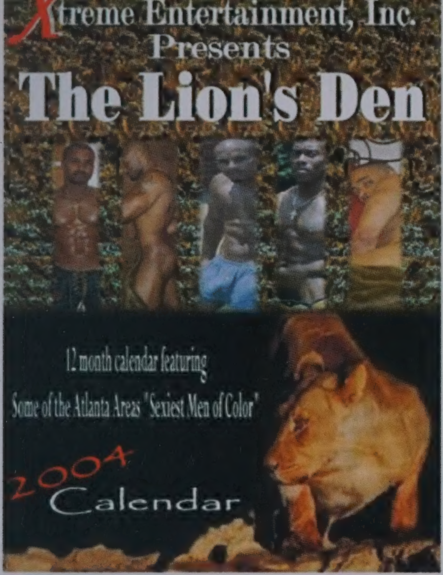
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BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

JUMPIN' THE BROOM

Anna and Leon Washington are veteran gay parents, meaning they have raised a homosexual to adulthood (quite successfully I must say), not that they are gay. They could easily qualify to lead a PFLAG workshop for parents of all stages though they are no paragons of political correctness. Every once in awhile, they might still say the "wrong thing." They raised two boys, one straight, one bent, in the watershed '60's and 70's, across the intersection of civil rights, black power, gay, and women's liberation movements. Homosexuality was still listed as a psychological disorder by the APA when I started showing classic signs of deviance. There was no PFLAG my mother could consult after I confirmed what she already knew. Since queerness was considered an illness, my father tried to make me see a psychologist in order to fix my broken arrow. My family worked hard to allow each other to be our selves. My parents had only each other to find a way to love a son from Oz who resided with them in Queens, New York.

When my mother told me of their intentions to come to Atlanta for my birthday, I cringed. I was looking forward to cutting up that night and I could not carry on so with Ma and Dad present. Eventually I got over myself and invited my friends to come meet the parents. The mix included singles and couples like Duncan and his partner David who always make it a point to see the folks whenever they visit. Last fall, I watched them "jump the broom" at their commitment ceremony. They used this ritual of our enslaved African ancestors who were denied the right to legally marry in order to demonstrate that over a century after the Emancipation Proclamation, gays are still denied that same right. I watched Duncan and my mother, two headstrong Capricorns, as they played catch-up in the kitchen while restocking the hors d'oeuvres. I pondered these two marriages and the years they managed and muddled together. I considered how two heterosexual strangers could get a marriage license without a hitch and instantaneously acquire advantages that are forbidden to Duncan and David, and freely enjoyed by Anna and Leon.

Like many others, I once considered marriage as a non-priority for my folk. I though that this particular discrimination seemed far less debilitating than the ills of self-hatred, black church vilification, and HIV scapegoating. Although I knew that marriage equality would offer very real and needed benefits, I assumed we were not ready for them. Given the lack of self-acceptance among us, how many of us would marry if we could? Is that number enough to justify the effort required to mobilize folks to action? But as I watched my parents party with my friends, half of whom are for all practical purposes married, I thought this is no less relevant than the other social support needs that our organizations tend to address. We may not see them on "Queer as Folk" or "Will and Grace" but there are thousands of black gay couples across the country, some out, some passing as roommates on Thanksgiving. And as they demonstrate comparable levels of loyalty, and certainly pay comparable taxes, they deserve the same rights. Only legalized marriage offers the full range of partner benefits. So why should my friends settle for some discount package crafted to appease the oxymoronic "compassionate conservatives" who weigh justice on the scales of their personal comfort?

I had to ask myself why I was not more fired up about this before? Why is the black gay media skittish if not silent about the subject? As a peo-

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BY CRAIG WASHINGTON

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

ple who have been cast out by outcasts, we operate from a survivalist frame of reference. We are too often all too happy just to get by. The AIDS crisis summoned the most impressive mobilization of black gays to date because we were dying from the virus as well as the complacency and judgment of our own people. We are slow to self-advocate as gay black people unless our very survival is undeniably threatened. Of course, we will not die from the lack of the right to marry. We will just continue to live a lower form of life confined by culturally sanctioned barbwire. Is it that we are too afraid to demand full equality before this country is ready to give it up without a fight? While we are quick to call out white gay advocacy groups for ignoring our political issues, we hesitate to address them ourselves. I am not espousing that we do like white gays do, but that we do get up and do something in the context of our own needs and resources. We have to find the courage to dispel the myth of scarcity that justifies everything we will not do for ourselves. The dearth of capital throughout black lgbt communities is real. The illusion that we don't not have the funds to mount and sustain black gay political advocacy is not. As we dismiss the fight for legal gay marriage as a white thang, your state legislature and your Governor Purdue have launched a preemptive war on rights you do not even have yet. As long as black gays dare to love and live together, then gays' right to marry is a black thing. As long as black church leaders like Rev. Walter Fauntroy dispute the indisputable parallels between gay civil rights and black civil rights, it is a contentious black thing. And if both Coretta Scott King and Rev. Al Sharpton publicly support gays right to marry, well it just does not get any blacker than that.

This domestic War on Freedom may be the jolt we needed to "get up, stand up" again. That night, at some point between the spades game, the fried chicken, and the "Hey Ya" living room soundtrack, it hit me. My birthday party was a gay Soul Food set that included at least four generations and six couples at various levels of commitment. Two of these couples included one partner who is unemployed. They could really use the perks that my parents worked to buy their own home, raise two kids, and retire comfortably. I was awakened to a new dream. I believe it is a dream worth us fighting for, a dream of possibilities where I can meet, love and legally marry the man of my dreams. I dream a world where my husband and I would provide each other lots of emotional and financial support, backrubs and toe curling sex, and we would also get tax cuts, partner insurance benefits, and uncontested power of attorney should one of us become incapacitated. We would reap what we deserve because in 2004, black gays refused to let the bigots "x away our right to life"*. They wrote their representatives, lobbied passionately, walked out in the middle of damning sermons, and insisted on bringing their partners to the family reunion. Well, a single brother can dream, can't he?

*Excerpted from the poem "Where Will You Be" written by Pat Parker, a Black lesbian writer.

Action Note: The National Black Justice Coalition is an ad hoc committee founded to generate support among black people for marriage equality for gays. They can be reached at www.nbjcoalition.org. or 212-330-6599. Keep the Faith.

Mr. Washington was lovingly raised by Anna and Leon Washington in Queens, New York and has lived in Atlanta for 11 years. His writings have been published in Clikque, Venus, Arise, Washington Blade, Southern Voice, Atlanta Voice, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, He currently serves as the Volunteer and Training Coordinator for Positive Impact, which provides mental health services for people affected by HIV. He can be reached at cwash360@cs.com.

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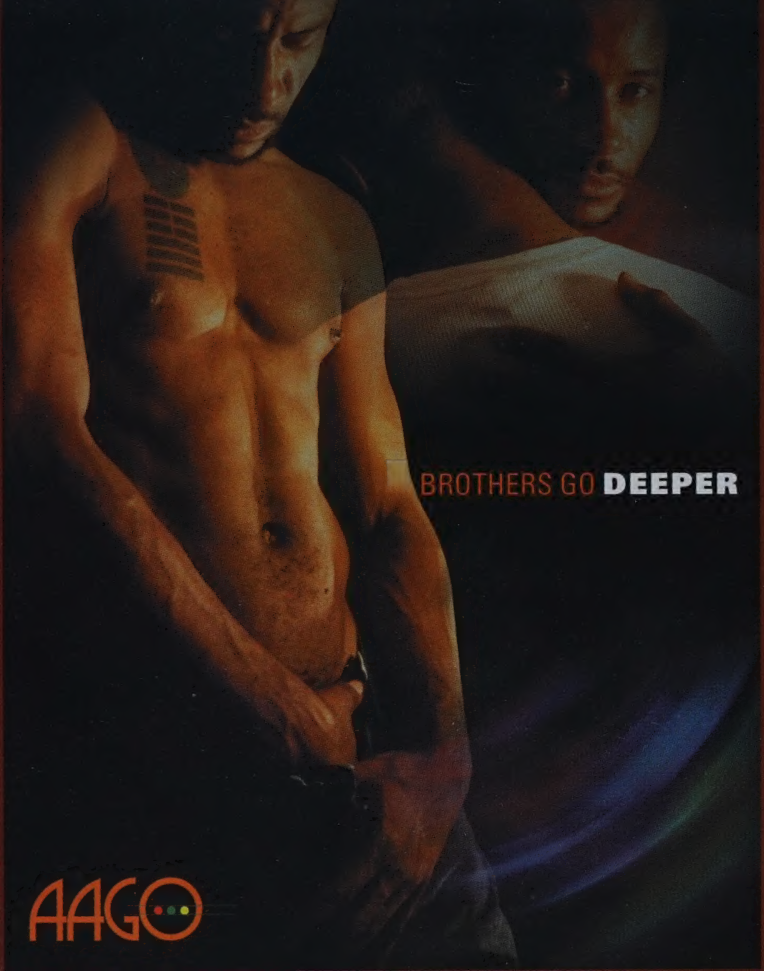

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By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

ONE FAMILY'S STORY.

Wanda and Sheryl

Wanda and Sheryl live in Durham, N.C. Sheryl works as an office administrator and Wanda is a leader in her community. Like most committed couples, after spending eight years together, they decided to buy a home.

On top of the expenses of buying a home, including a costly inspection and closing fees, Wanda and Sheryl had to spend even more money on legal documents to guarantee that if something happened to one of them, the other would be able to inherit the home without interference from the state or a hostile family members.

Photo by Judy G. Rolfe

No matter how much this devoted couple has promised to each other, the law does not provide them with the same legal protections it does for married couples. If either Wanda or Sheryl ends up in the hospital, the hospital could prevent the other one from visiting her. And even though they've both contributed to Social Security all of their lives, neither would receive the survivor benefits if the other one died, like Wanda's mother received when her father died.

Why talk about this now? Because extreme political organizations like Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council are playing politics with the lives of people like Wanda and Sheryl. These so-called "pro-family" groups claim that providing basic protections to devoted gay couples would bring about "the end of society as we know it."1 They even want to amend the U.S. Constitution to deny any legal protections for gay partners and their families.

Meanwhile, gay and lesbian couples in long-term, committed relationships aren't eligible for government-issued civil marriage licenses and the legal protections they provide. Although no government should ever tell religious institutions who they can marry, the government should not discriminate in providing civil marriage licenses to any devoted couple.

America has problems - an uncertain economy, the loss of millions of jobs and threats to our national security - but loving couples like Wanda and Sheryl are not one of them. Like every other couple in America, gay and lesbian couples in long-term, committed relationships deserve the same benefits and protections under the law.

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ALWAYS A BRIDES MAID

By Scott Bogan

Every so often a straight friend of mine will ask me what I think about gay marriage and my usual answer is "I don't know. I never really thought about it". But since the topic has been in the news lately, I have been giving it some thought. Not so much whether or not I am in favor of it but more so would I get married if I could. Let me first start off by saying that while it is true that I am dating, I don't know anyone that I am even remotely considering as prospect! Whew...I can hear the sigh of relief being breathed all over Atlanta.

The truth of the matter is that relationships are hard. Strike that.... What I meant to say was relationships are damn hard. In fact, life as a single person is hard enough so when you try to factor in another person with their idiosyncrasies, morals, values, beliefs etc. coupled your own there is bound to be chaos. Oh yeah, I didn't even mention two men that have testosterone running through their veins which constantly puts them in direct competition with one another. Then, more specifically, you have me. I am a completely cerebral, overly analytical, spoiled complex person that possesses every Gemini trait known. Now don't get me wrong, I am caring, affectionate, I'm not spoiled to the point that I am selfish and I definitely know how to love someone but the problem is (as with most people) my ego. My ego will not allow me to let go of any of my past experiences or the experiences of my friend's that I have witnessed first hand. I think the reason I can't let go is because I consider myself to be a smart person and smart people don't allow themselves to make the same mistake twice. Or do they?

I believe that marriage is a commitment that is supposed to last for a lifetime. People exchange vows, merge finances and combine households planning on growing old with a significant other. The problem arises when we start to romanticize this idea with thoughts of midnights in front of the fireplace, vacations on the beach and kisses under the mistletoe. You know all that bullshit you see in television commercials. We start to believe that is how we should be living in some ideological television euphoric bliss. I wish they would create a television commercial where a couple is having a heated argument and neither person is saying what they really feel. Instead, both people are focusing on their anger, pointing the finger and calling each other names until someone storms out or as is the case a lot of the time between two men, it comes to blows. Yes, we all get lonely and most of us want a relationship. What we don't realize is that all relationships require work and less than half of us are willing to do the work. This is the kind of work that has to be done at home first. Work that requires honesty with yourself and with your partner and most people don't have that kind of honesty in them. Please notice that I didn't say most people aren't honest....I said most people can't be honest with themselves about themselves. If you need an example, see the previous paragraph. I was at a party with a straight couple that I know who recently married and I asked them "how's married life?" They both replied almost simultaneously "the shit is hard". I love them for that response because while it is not the not the typical "oh, it's wonderful" it is very real and very honest. I look at the model of my own parents. My mother, after being married to my father for 29 years decided that she was sick of him. She came home from work one day with a legal pad

PHOTO BY FORREST COLEY wcoley@psualum.com

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 36

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

that had every item in our house on it and told him "This is a list of everything in the house, put a check by what you want. I am leaving." And she left. I admire my mother for this because she realized what she wasn't getting out of her relationship and she made a decision. More importantly, I admire my father because after my mother left, my father realized that he wasn't pulling his weight in the relationship, decided to do the work and won her back. After 3 years of separation, they reconciled. Then there are two guys that I know that live in NYC. As I understand the story, they met during gay pride spent the night with each other, moved in together shortly there after and have been together now for about 12 or 13 years. They are even raising a child. I could be wrong but I would be willing to bet my right arm that they have had some difficult times throughout their years together. But through it all they have managed to stick together probably because of their love, friendship and their ability to do "the work".

Over the Christmas holidays, I woke up one morning to find that I could not hear out of either of my ears. After calling my doctor's office, yelling into the phone trying to explain my emergency and having the receptionist yell back at me telling me when I could come in, I was so overwhelmed that I broke down and started to cry. It turned out that during my weekly swim at the gym, water became trapped in both of my ears and they got infected. But while I was going through all of this all I could think of was 1) does Prada make a hearing aid and 2) how alone I really am. Not many people know this but more than anything in the world, I am afraid of growing old by myself and this was a very real example of what could be waiting for me in my years to come.

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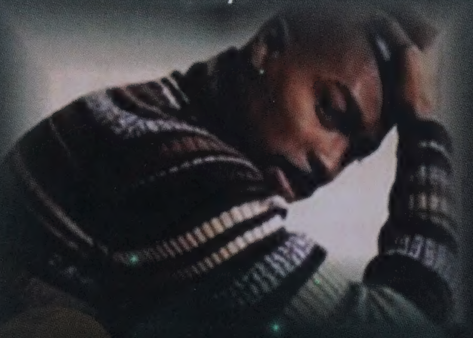

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By FRANKLIN LOWE, MD

Penis Enlargements

Consider The Risk First

Men have gone to great lengths (pun intended) searching for ways to increase the size of their penises. While techniques vary from wearing penile weights, using vacuum devices and undergoing penile lengthening surgery, the goal is always the same -- to have a larger penis.

Like breast implants, penile lengthening surgery is cosmetic surgery that promises to make your penis larger; however, it has never been endorsed or approved by the American Urological Association.

Penile lengthening surgery was initially developed and utilized for people with congenital abnormalities, including microphallus or bladder exstrophy. The surgery was not originally intended for widespread use for cosmetic enhancement. Unfortunately, a whole industry of penile plastic surgery has emerged, targeting the countless men who are unsatisfied with their penis size. But there have been several problems.

Many physicians who open penile enhancement centers and advertise their services in magazines and gay newspapers get flooded with men searching for a larger phallus. Of the thousands of men who've been operated on, many have complained of disfiguring results. Consequently, as often as these centers have opened, they've closed. Many surgeons have lost their licenses and/or are no longer practicing medicine.

How does it work?
Penile enlargement surgery involves four procedures, none of which actually elongate your penis. The first involves cutting the penile suspensory ligament, which holds your penis to the pubic bone. Cutting this ligament lets your penis fall away from your pubic bone, giving it greater exposure. The downside to this surgery is that your penis is unhinged from the pubic bone, so your penis loses its anchor. When erect, your penis points down, which frequently causes difficulty maintaining an erection during intercourse. In addition, sensory nerves to your penis are often damaged or cut during the surgery because the nerves run through the ligament area at the base of the penis.

Is my penis too small?

* Even though very few men are satisfied with the size of their penis, most men are "normal." The average size of an adult penis is six inches. There is some variability, due to race and genetic factors. Almost 95 percent of men have a stretched penile length between 4.9 and 7.3 inches. Penis size may be measured very inaccurately because determining the true base of your penis depends on how much pressure you place on the skin/fat at your pubic region. The second

DID YOU KNOW?

- Penile enlargement surgery involves four procedures, none of which actually elongate the penis.
- After surgery, many men are left with lumpy-bumpy, desensitized and/or scarred genitals.
- Many of the surgeons who performed a high volume of penile enlargement surgeries face large numbers of malpractice lawsuits. What the promotional information and advertisements for penile lengthening surgery won't tell you is that the numerous risks of this procedure by far outweigh the minimal benefits.

part of a lengthening procedure is a Y-V or Z plasty on the pre-pubic skin. This is a fancy name for an operation that adds skin to the base of your penis. This "added" skin is necessary to cover the unhinged part of your penis, and lets it hang down further. Even though these incisions are made in areas covered by your pubic hair, ugly scars and loss of pubic hair frequently result. Scar contraction (shrinkage) and keloid formation are other common side effects to this part of the surgery.

The third aspect of penis enlargement surgery is the enhancement of penile girth. This was initially accomplished by injecting fat under your penile skin. It may sound great, but it didn't work well because the fat gets rapidly absorbed by your body in some areas, but not in others -- so you're left with a "lumpy-bumpy" penis. Subsequent attempts to increase penile circumference employ bands of fat harvested from one part of your body, which are then sewn onto your penis shaft. It gets worse: the skin on your penis must be peeled back before the fat can be sewn to the shaft. After this is done, the surgeon pulls your skin back down to cover the fat. Often you'll end up with a lumpy-bumpy penis when varying amounts of fat get absorbed back into your body. Scarring often persists, which leaves an irregular penis.

The final component of enlargement surgery is pre-pubic liposuction, which gives the impression of a larger penis in the face of a flatter stomach. It was originally utilized to harvest fat for injection under penile skin as well as for flattening a paunchy pre-pubic area.

Does it work?
In essence, this surgery only provides the appearance of a larger penis; nothing is done to actually add length. It's only an illusion, at best, and a very expensive illusion at that. Pre-pubic liposuction does provide some cosmetic improvement if you have a fat paunch. Even so, these procedures carry high risks of scarring, disfigurement and desensitization of your penis.

Do not be fooled! Do not do it! You are more apt to end up with a disfigured penis than a larger one.

Key Points
---There are high risks associated with penile enlargement surgery, and little benefit to be gained.

--- Don't do it!

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

story, they met during gay pride spent the night with each other, moved in together shortly there after and have been together now for about 12 or 13 years. They are even raising a child. I could be wrong but I would be willing to bet my right arm that they have had some difficult times throughout their years together. But through it all they have managed to stick together probably because of their love, friendship and their ability to do "the work".

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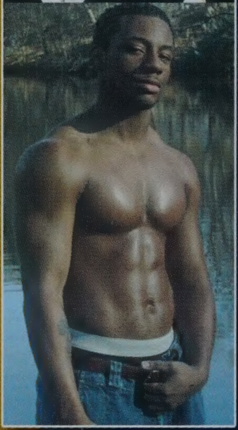
I would love to find my soul mate or better yet someone that I could just mesh with and yes, I would consider the possibility of marriage. Am I fooling myself into believing that this person is going to make my life easier, there won't be difficult times and we are going to live happily ever after? The answer is no. In the real world, marriage/relationships are very difficult and require a lot of work that has to be done willingly by both parties. So the next time I am asked what I think about gay marriage my response will be "If two people love each other, respect each other, are committed to each other and are friends.....I say go for it".

Scott Bogan
clikquescott@aol.com

For The Best
Atlanta, Look T



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By SARAH ALBERT

Women's Health: Your Top Ten List

More than 185 women recently took our second annual health survey. You told us about your interests, and shared some of your most private health concerns. The results have been tallied.

#1. Depression and Anxiety

Depression tops your list of health concerns for the second year in a row. Last year, approximately 35 percent of respondents said depression was their most pressing health concern. This year, 21.3 percent of women surveyed said depression was their top health concern. In addition, about 52.7 percent of respondents have been diagnosed with anxiety or depression, and 25.4 percent of respondents were interested in learning more about stress management.

#2. Sexual Addiction

If you think only men want to learn more about sexual addiction, you're wrong. More than 15 percent of women said they were most interested in sexual addiction, when choosing from a list of compulsive/ addictive behaviors.

#3. Club Drugs

When choosing from a list of legal and illegal drugs, more than 10 percent of survey respondents were most interested in recreational drugs, including ecstasy and special K.

#4. Prescription Drug Abuse

In recent news, the pain medication OxyContin has received quite a bit of media attention because of its potential for abuse. For some, it has offered needed relief for disease and injury-related pain. For others, it has been the cause of addiction, suffering and pain. Yet prescription drug abuse has been a problem long before OxyContin hit the market.

#5. Herpes and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

A lot of lesbian and bisexual women feel protected from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) during woman-to-woman sex. When asked which STD they wanted more information about, more than 50 percent of respondents chose none. Yet the fact is, women who have sex with women (WSW) are at risk for STDs, and the latest research points to a lack of education on the part of women and their health care providers.

By SARAH ALBERT

#6. Booze

"Look at the community. It revolves so much around bars and clubs," said Michele Fitzsimmons, outreach coordinator for the Lesbian AIDS Project.

#7. Eating Disorders

Weight, body and food obsessions are alive and kicking in the LGBT communities.

Seventeen percent of survey respondents chose obesity as their top health concern, and 21.5 percent of respondents have had an eating disorder. Furthermore, 25.8 percent of women, when choosing from a list of addictive and compulsive behaviors, chose eating disorders as the most interesting, second only to alcohol abuse.

#8. Cancer

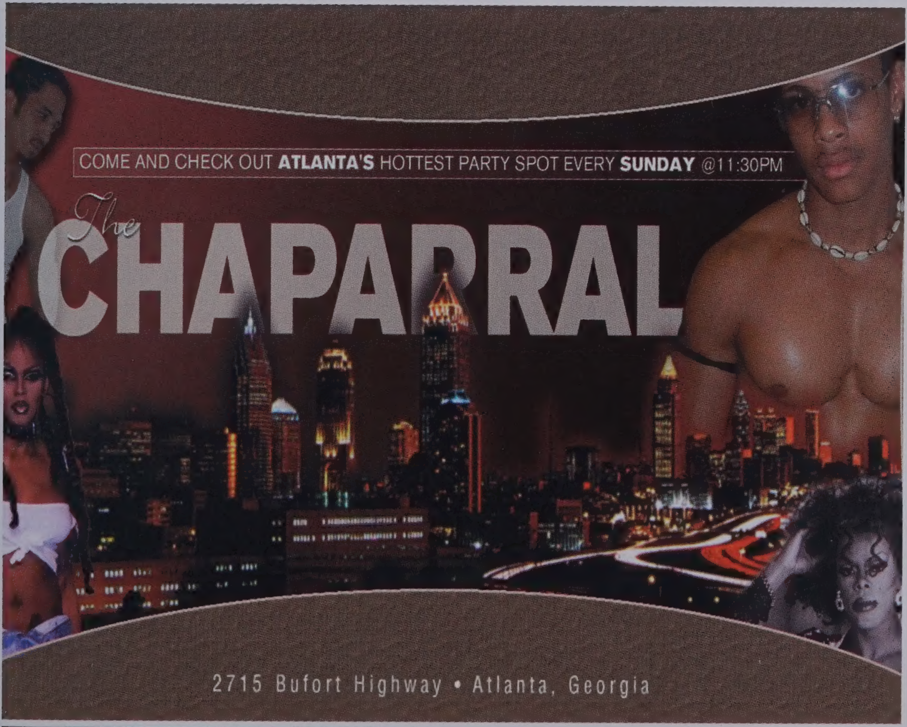
Cancer has long been a concern for lesbian and bisexual women. While only 4.4 percent of survey respondents said they'd been diagnosed with cancer, 15.9 percent of women said that cancer was their top health concern.

#9. Pap Test

When asked how often women go to the gynecologist, 23.5 percent of women said they have not been in more than two years, and 17.5 percent of women have never visited the gynecologist.

#10. Doctor's Don't Talk About Sex with Patients

A total of 43.5 percent of survey respondents said their doctors never ask about sexual practices, and 30.4 percent said their doctors rarely ask.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By Jeanne Sahadi

Most lucrative college degrees

Latest survey on hiring and starting salaries finds there may be more in '04 for many college grads.

The job market may not be booming. But for many in the college class of 2004, it won't be quite as dismal as it was for last year's grads.

That's the preliminary conclusion of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), which released its latest quarterly starting-salary survey on Thursday.

It's still early days for most college seniors on the hunt for a job. Only a small number of students typically have full-time job offers in hand halfway through their senior year. And the number of offers covered in NACE's winter survey is a small percentage of the offers covered in its fall survey, which reflects hiring through the previous August.

Still, NACE thinks there's reason for cautious optimism.

On balance, employers said they expect college-grad hires to be up 12.7 percent from last year, which is the first hiring increase in two years, said NACE spokesperson Camille Luckenbaugh.

Based on the 2,300 offers covered in the current survey, more disciplines were reporting increases in starting salaries.

Only a third of disciplines are seeing starting salaries drop, compared with nearly half at the same time last year.

Major dollars

WHAT'S A DEGREE WORTH?

	AVERAGE STARTING SALARY	CHANGE FROM YR. BEFORE
Computer engineering	$53,117	+0.7%
Chemical engineering	$52,563	+2.5%
Electrical engineering	$49,926	-1.4%
Mechanical engineering	$49,088	+2.0%
Computer science	$48,656	+8.9%
Industrial/manuf. engineering	$48,283	+0.4%
Information sciences	$42,108	+2.6%
Accounting	$42,045	+0.1%
Construction science	$41,232	-3.7%
Mngmt info systems/ Biz data processing	$41,103	+1.3%
Civil engineering	$41,046	-1.2%
Economics/Finance	$40,596	+0.5%
Logistics/ Materials mgmt.	$40,484	+3.5%
Business admin.	$37,368	+2.0%
Nursing	$37,253	-4.3%
Marketing	$36,071	+1.0%
Liberal arts majors*	$30,153	+3.5%
Elementary teacher education	$27,317	-6.8%
Psychology	$25,032	-8.0%

*as a group.

Source: NACE Winter 2004 Salary Survey

By Jeanne Sahadi

Majors in computer engineering and chemical engineering top the list of most lucrative college degrees. Average starting salaries for computer engineers reached $53,117, up very slightly from their levels at this time last year. Starting salaries for chemical engineers, meanwhile, rose 2.5 percent to $52,563.

WHO MAKES SIX FIGURES?

- Video game artists, perfumers and perfusionists
- Fit models, court reporters and broadcast captioners

Starting salaries for those who major in civil engineering and electrical engineering still compare favorably with those of most other majors, but both experienced modest declines compared with last year.

For the first time since 2001, employers reported increases in starting salary offers to students in computer science, information sciences and systems, and management information systems.

The average offer for computer science majors rose 8.9 percent to $48,656; and more than half the offers surveyed topped $50,000.

Information sciences grads had an average starting salary of $42,108, up 2.6 percent from last year, while management information systems grads have seen starting salaries average $41,103, up a modest 1.3 percent.

Meanwhile, liberal arts majors still rank on the low-end of the salary scale, although as a group, the average starting offer rose 3.5 percent to $30,153.

Many psychology majors aren't as likely to see that kind of paycheck, however. Their starting salary average fell 8 percent to $25,032.

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On The Big Screen

AGAINST THE ROPES

RELEASE 2/20/04

Inspired by a true story, follows a successful female boxing manager, Jackie Kallen (Meg Ryan), as she trains a new fighter, Luther Shaw (Omar Epps), that she believes can be a champion.

DIRTY DANCING: HAVANA NIGHTS

RELEASE 2/27/04

The story, inspired by the 1987 original Dirty Dancing, is set in 1958 Cuba and centers on a 17-year-old girl (Romola Garai) who moves to the island with her family. She falls for a local dancer (Diego Luna) who helps her discover herself and the joy of experiencing newfound freedom.

TWISTED

RELEASE 2/20/04

In Twisted, a police detective, Jessica Shepard (Ashley Judd), tracks a serial killer who murders the men she dates. When Jessica begins blacking out before each murder takes place, her parter, Mike Delmarco (Andy Garcia), and the police commissioner (Samuel L. Jackson) target her as the prime suspect.

STARSKY & HUTCH

RELEASE 3/5/04

Based on the popular 1970s TV series, the story follows the titular pair of bachelor undercover cops (Ben Stiller as Dave Starsky, Owen Wilson as Ken "Hutch" Hutchinson), focusing on how the duo first met and teamed up on their first big case: uncovering a cocaine operation run by a big-time drug dealer named Reese (Vince Vaughn). The two zoom around town in a red and white 1974 Ford Torino, solving crimes with the help of Huggy Bear (Snoop Dogg), their street informant, and annoying their boss, Capt. Dobey (Fred Williamson).

Snoop Dogg as
Huggy bear

TAKING LIVES RELEASE 3/19/04

An FBI profiler (Angelina Jolie) is assigned to bring in a serial killer who has spent 20 years assuming the identities of those he has killed.

ETHERNAL SUNSHINE
RELEASE 3/19/04

Joel (Jim Carrey) and Clementine (Kate Winslet) are a couple trying to jump-start their romance by forgetting all the painful moments of their relationship with the help of a brand-new treatment that simply erases parts of their memories. But when Clementine has Joel erased from her memory, he wants her gone from his memory and asks the doctor (Tom Wilkinson) who invented the process for help. But as he recalls the remaining few memories of their time together, Joel changes his mind, and tries to mentally overcome the procedure.

JERSEY GIRL
RELEASE 3/19/04

Set in New York and New Jersey, circa 1996, the story is said to be loosely based on writer-director Kevin Smith's own experiences as a husband and father. Ollie Trinke (Ben Affleck), a slick music promoter, meets a book editor (Jennifer Lopez) at a company Christmas party and the two fall madly, passionately in love. But marriage and fatherhood bring about sudden changes in Ollie's previously simple life.

NEVER DIE ALONE RELEASE 3/26/04

Based on cult novelist Donald Goines' novel of the same name, NEVER DIE ALONE is a richly literate film noir about King David (DMX), a hard-boiled, stylish criminal who returns to his hometown seeking redemption but finding only violent death. But he did not die alone... King David's final moments are spent with Paul (David Arquette), an aspiring journalist who knew him just a few minutes but upon whose life he would forever have an impact.

LADY KILLERS
RELEASE 3/26/04

In the Coen brothers' remake of the Peter Sellers-Alec Guinness original, Tom Hanks plays a Southern professor who organizes a gang of double-crossing thieves to rob a riverboat casino. They set up shop by renting a room in the house of an odd old lady. When she figures out what they're up to, the robbers decide she must be eliminated. But the woman isn't as easy to kill as they thought.

SHOWTIME RENEWS CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED SERIES

"THE L WORD" FOR SECOND SEASON

13-Episode Pick-Up Is Fastest Renewal In Premium Network's History

the L word
kit
MAKING AMENDS

On the heels of the launch of its critically-acclaimed new series, THE L WORD, SHOWTIME has given the drama a 13-episode second-season renewal, it was announced today by Robert Greenblatt, Showtime's President of Entertainment. The pick-up represents the fastest renewal in the premium network's history, following its debut 11 days ago on January 18, 2004. Production on Season Two is slated to begin in June for the series which airs on Sundays at 10:00 PM ET/PT.

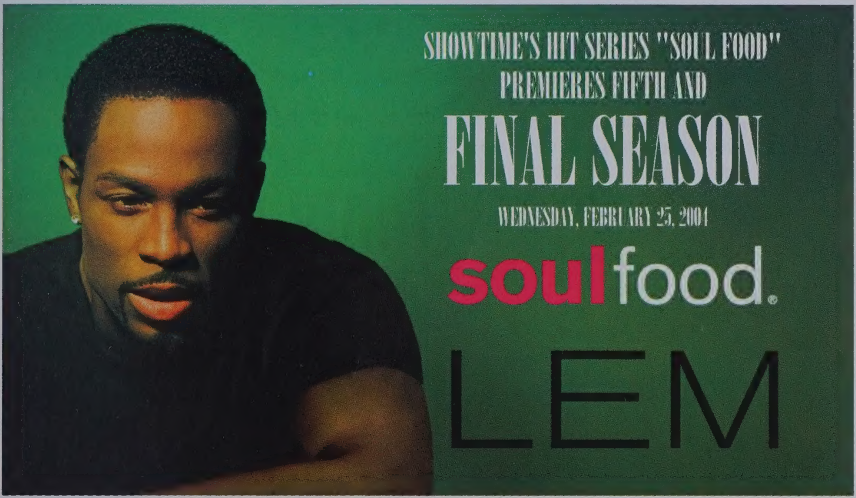
"This groundbreaking series has quickly and successfully captivated the attention of viewers, critics, journalists, and even a presidential candidate, creating the kind of incessant buzz that signals a hit," said Greenblatt. "We already have 14 episodes completed so we've seen the strong future of the series, and with its provocative storytelling, rich character development, amazing cast, and universal appeal, the decision to renew THE L WORD was a no-brainer."

same sex.
different city.
the L word
SUNDAYS AT 10PM

The first two episodes generated four times the Showtime prime-time average rating, pulling in a strong audience in spite of the fact that the second installment aired opposite the powerful Golden Globes telecast. From its unprecedented New York Magazine cover photo before the show had even debuted, to the full-page color cartoon of the cast in the New Yorker to references in the New York Times op.ed. pages, this show seems to be on everyone's lips. Even Gen. Wesley Clark has mentioned "the l word" in interviews lately and he wasn't only referring to the word "liberal."

THE L WORD was hailed by Tom Shales in The Washington Post as a "wickedly provocative...undeniably seductive TV." TV Guide called the series "a dynamic new drama." New York Magazine labeled the show "a powerful, wildly sexy new television series," while US Weekly called the concept "groundbreaking" and proclaimed: "Let the Emmy hype begin."

The drama is about a group of young women in Los Angeles, and follows their lives, careers, and romantic relationships - both gay and straight. The one-hour drama's cast includes Jennifer Beals, Erin Daniels, Leisha Hailey, Laurel Holloman, Mia Kirshner, Katherine Moennig and Pam Grier.


SHOWTIME'S HIT SERIES "SOUL FOOD"
PREMIERES FIFTH AND
FINAL SEASON
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2004
soul food.
LEM

SOUL FOOD, entering its fifth and final season on Wednesday, February 25 at 10:00 PM (ET/PT), has been a hit with critics and fans alike. Honored with numerous awards, the show also has the distinction of being the longest-running African-American drama on television and one of Showtime's most popular series. This year, for the second time in a row, SOUL FOOD was named "Outstanding Drama Series" at the 2003 NAACP Image Awards, and cast member Vanessa Williams was named "Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series."

Returning members of the award-winning cast include Nicole Ari Parker ("Remember the Titans," "Boogie Nights," "Brown Sugar"), Malinda Williams ("The Wood"), Vanessa Williams ("Melrose Place," "New Jack City"), Rockmond Dunbar ("Earth 2," "The Practice"), Darrin DeWitt Henson ("Longshot") and Aaron Meeks (SHOWTIME'S A STORM IN SUMMER). Boris Kodjoe, a series regular for three years, will be making two guest appearances in the role of Damon, love interest to Nicole Ari Parker's character Teri.

Pro Football Hall of Famer Jim Brown ("The Dirty Dozen") will appear in a multi-episode arc in season five as an FBI agent who pressures ex-con Lem (Darrin DeWitt Henson) to spy on his business partner. Also making guest appearances will be Hill Harper ("The Handler," "City of Angels") as Kenny's (Dunbar) brother Kelvin Chadway, Vondie Curtis Hall ("Chicago Hope") as a new love interest for Teri, Diahann Carroll reprising her role as 'Aunt Ruthie,' and Mario Van Peebles.

A dramatic series based on the 1997 hit film of the same name, SOUL FOOD premiered on Showtime in June 2000. SOUL FOOD is a Waterwalk Production, Edmonds Entertainment and State Street Pictures production in association with Paramount Network Television. Season five of SOUL FOOD is executive produced by Tracey Edmonds, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, George Tillman, Jr., Robert Teitel, Kathleen-McGhee Anderson and Salim Akil.

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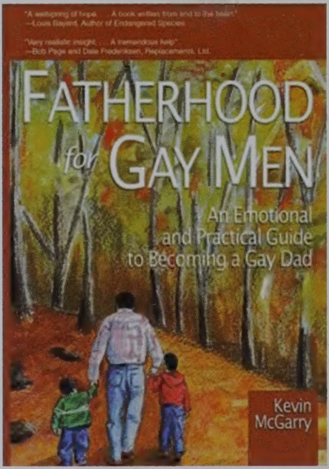
BY KEVIN RIORDAN

A D.C.-based author uses his personal experiences with adoption to demystify what gay family life is like for parents.

Bringing Home Baby



LIKE MANY GAY men of the Baby Boomer generation, Kevin McGarry suppressed his yearning to become a parent. It just didn't seem feasible or practical – back in the good ol' days of disco – for an out gay man to become a father.

But when McGarry began the process of separately adopting two Vietnamese boys, the affable accountant from Northern Virginia also unearthed his ability to write. "Fatherhood for Gay Men: An Emotional and Practical Guide to Becoming a Gay Day" is the product of these parallel journeys.

"I wanted to put my story out there to empower other gay men," McGarry says from the Arlington, Va., home he shares with his sons Andrew, 5, and Vincent, who turns 3 in December.

McGarry's user-friendly book – a combination of memoir, how-to guide and inspirational essay – combines practical advice, moral support and uplifting observations about the sometimes quietly kept joys of fatherhood.

Well-researched, candid, and written in clear, concise prose, "Fatherhood for Gay Men" summarizes everything from the international and domestic climate for single gay male adoption, which are more flexible in some ways than one might think, to the intricacies of the adoption process itself, which can be a challenge, but is hardly impossible.

The 108-page book helps demystify what many may see as a daunting prospect.

A 48-YEAR-OLD OHIO native who grew up the third of six children in an Irish-Catholic family, McGarry says he "always had parenting instincts," but denied them. He came out in 1980, long before the "gayby boom" was on the horizon.

Gradually, however, he came to realize that, in his words, "being gay and being a parent are not mutually exclusive."

And as it turned out, once he began the international adoption process – which involves the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship & Immigration Services, formerly the Immigration & Naturalization Service, and private agencies abroad that can cost up to $30,000 – McGarry discovered that his homosexuality was far less a concern than he expected.

"It's kind of a side issue," he says.

Most countries do not allow their citizens to be adopted by gay men, but "Fatherhood for Gay Men" has a helpful summary of nations, such as Vietnam, that have no such restrictions.

He wasn't exactly starting from scratch. He'd kept a journal of his trip to Vietnam to adopt Andrew in 1998, and also when he later returned there to adopt Vincent. He wrote an outline "to see if [a book] was feasible," and then wrote three chapters, which he sent to two gay-friendly publishing houses.

Several months later, Haworth Press — home of the Harrington Park Press imprint — offered McGarry a contract.

"I wanted to take the mystery out of the adoption process," he says. "I'm not a superhuman. If I can do it, other gay men can do it."

While an adoptive gay dad does not share DNA with his kids, McGarry believes that "what you have to go through to adopt" helps forge the bond between parent and child.

"It's intense," he says. "You feel connected to this child by some osmosis."

The author also noted that while adoption is often a second choice for straight couples, it's often the first choice for gay men.

And while he wouldn't mind the occasional five-minute break from the full-time job of caring for two energetic boys, McGarry has no regrets.
" I give my sons a lot," he says. "And they give me a lot."

MORE INFO
'Fatherhood for Gay Men: An Emotional and Practical Guide to Becoming a Gay Dad'
Kevin McGarry — Harrington Park Press
Soft cover, $19.95, Hard cover, $29.95

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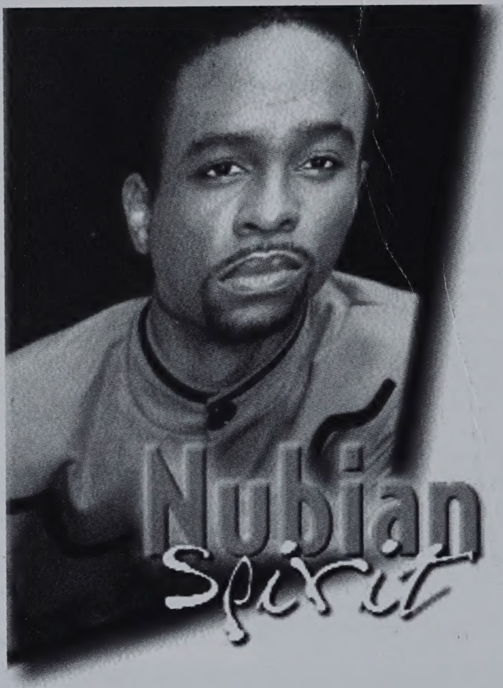

Becoming Your Ultimate Self

Love is celebrating yourself, your history, and your herstory.

Finding your place in the world can be a challenging task. Most of our lives are spent looking for "love." Let me cut to the chase and say right off "love is not something you get but something you do. Love cannot be found outside of yourself it must be something that you do from inside yourself." So indulge me for a few moments and consider. I recently had a conversation with some friends. We were discussing one of our friend's desires to find the right mate. Feeling that finding the right person wasn't going to happen soon he decided that he wanted to get a pet because "it will love me and I can love it." The group's reaction was mixed. Some asked if he was ready for the level of responsibility- he couldn't just go out, go on trips, or leave home for long periods of time on a whim because he has another life to care for. Others asked what he was really looking for. Because a pet gives what you give it but it cannot satisfy a desire that is deep within you. Something outside you cannot fulfill something that is missing from within yourself.

A pet, a person, a job, ...things can only be a distraction from the real problem or need. The reason is that love cannot be found "IN" someone or something else. Love must first come from you. What if you get the pet, job, home, person that you want (remember right now these things are objects of our interest and affection/desire) when the "thrill" is gone and "settling in" has occurred you are left with the same feelings or worse because now you have "what you wanted" but are still not happy. Have you ever gotten with the person you most wanted and after a period of time were bored, unhappy, or disinterested? Ever sat around wondering why she or he left? Ever lay in the bed next to "the one" wondering "what am I doing here"?

From the earliest moments of our lives we are bombarded with messages of love. Movies, television, music, and other images are constantly conjured up reminding us of the loneliness and that the only way to combat that loneliness is by being "in love" with someone. So begins our lives on a never-ending search for love. So without much guidance we seek out the images of love that are presented to us. We search for the perfect person, however we define "perfect." Sometimes it is how much money she or he can spend, what we can get from someone, how well they throw it down, how "beautiful" they are, or how they make us "feel." But if you are honest with yourself most of the time even satisfying these wants still leaves us lonely, even when we are not alone.

So love must come from inside. Your first step is to be honest with yourself about how you really feel about yourself. You have to be able to appreciate who you are. You exist exactly how you are supposed to. Your wants, desires, feeling, likes and dislikes are natural and normal. First you must rid yourself of feelings of worthlessness, powerlessness, and personal pain. Then accept yourself just as you are, on the inside. This does not mean that you cannot work on the outside. But make sure you are strong and secure first in tour thinking and feeling before you go after "fixing the outside appearance" which is fleeting.

Then celebrate who you are. Enjoy life. Give what you want, to others. If you want love do loving acts. But be clear that you are doing them because you want to and it's right, not because you want any particular reaction or action from someone else. Take some time this month and next month to learn about your history and herstory. Know that you come from a heritage that if full of greatness. This greatness is your birthright and your destiny is unlimited. Find out about the great African and African-American history makers who are a part of your cultural and racial greatness. Celebrate the great women in the world who have made a difference for all of us; whose lives light the way for true personal power and triumph for all of us.

Finally beloved be triumphant. Live a life that is not limited by what we think we have but by what we do in the world. Love is something that you do. The reward of love is love itself. The ideas that love is something that you can get, earn, find, lose, and such is wrong. The real key is that love is an action word. Love is something that you do. The key to love is that you must do love with no real expectations that anything will happen in return. This is true love. Love means celebrating yourself. And by celebrating your history and herstory you can add to the reasons to celebrate yourself. Then live triumphantly. Love is as love does.

Meditate on these thoughts: I live in Love as I let love live in me, through me, around me, and AS me. I acknowledge the hidden potential greatness inside me by recognizing the greatness of the "sheroes" and heroes in my life and culture. These are examples of what I can be if I love myself enough to be an agent of love in the world for others and myself. Love is what I do and I do love me. I love me, I love me, I love me and I will love others because of my love and respect for myself and my heritage.

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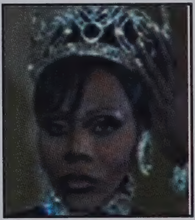
Current Title Holders Of Some Of The Nation's Leading Gay Pageants

The Royal Court

Clikque Magazine salutes the current title holders of some of the most prestigious pageantry systems in our community. By being listed here, know that you are among the best talent that our community has to offer. Some day your name will be listed among our nations elite such as Terrilyn Foxx, Stasha Sanchez, Monte St. James, Tim Bohar, Arche Bonet, Jasmine Bonet, Paris Frantz, Raquel Lorde, Joe Jackson, Tommie Ross, Alecia Kelly, Chevelle Brooks, Sasha Valentino, Chanel Necole, Niesha Dupree, and Cliqkue's former cover Goddess Necole Luv Dupree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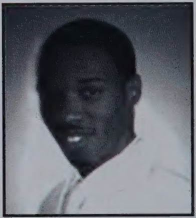
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The Royal Court
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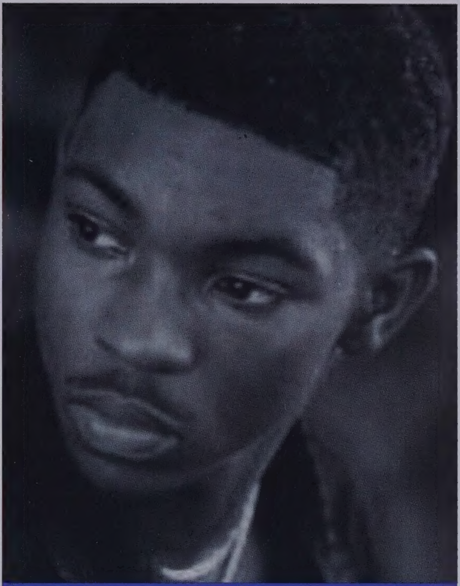

In Our Spotlight this month is 20 year old Ke'Ante Bonet from Jacksonville, Florida. Although a new comer to the world of male pageants and entertainment , Ke'Ante as the reigning Mr. Black America New Comer is already showing promising signs of being one of the top at his craft.

Singing, dancing, drawing, creating websites and props are some of the hobbies of this stud who says that his Mentors and Role Models are Maria Hendricks & Gerald "Jalese" Neil.

His favorite Male Entertainers are Romeo St. James, Alphonse Dupree, Al Milan Dupree, Ronnie Davis, & Christopher Iman.

Favorite Female Entertainers are Jasmine Bone't, Stasha Sanchez, Angelica "Piggy" Sanchez, Evelyn Sanchez, Tatianna & Racquell Devine Roberts

"Life is short", says Ke'Ante and suggests that we Live now and worry later.

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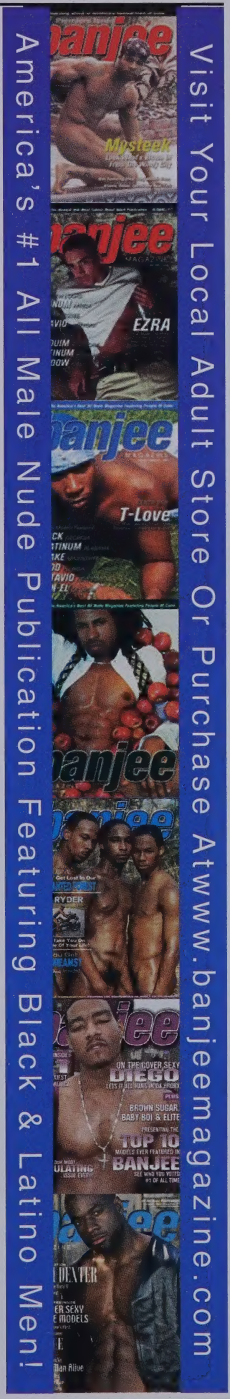
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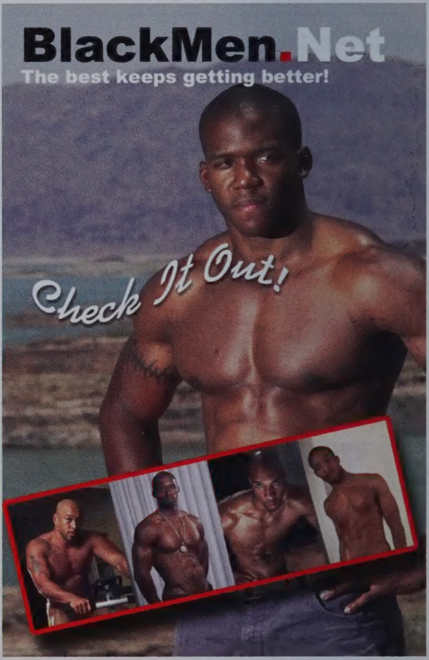
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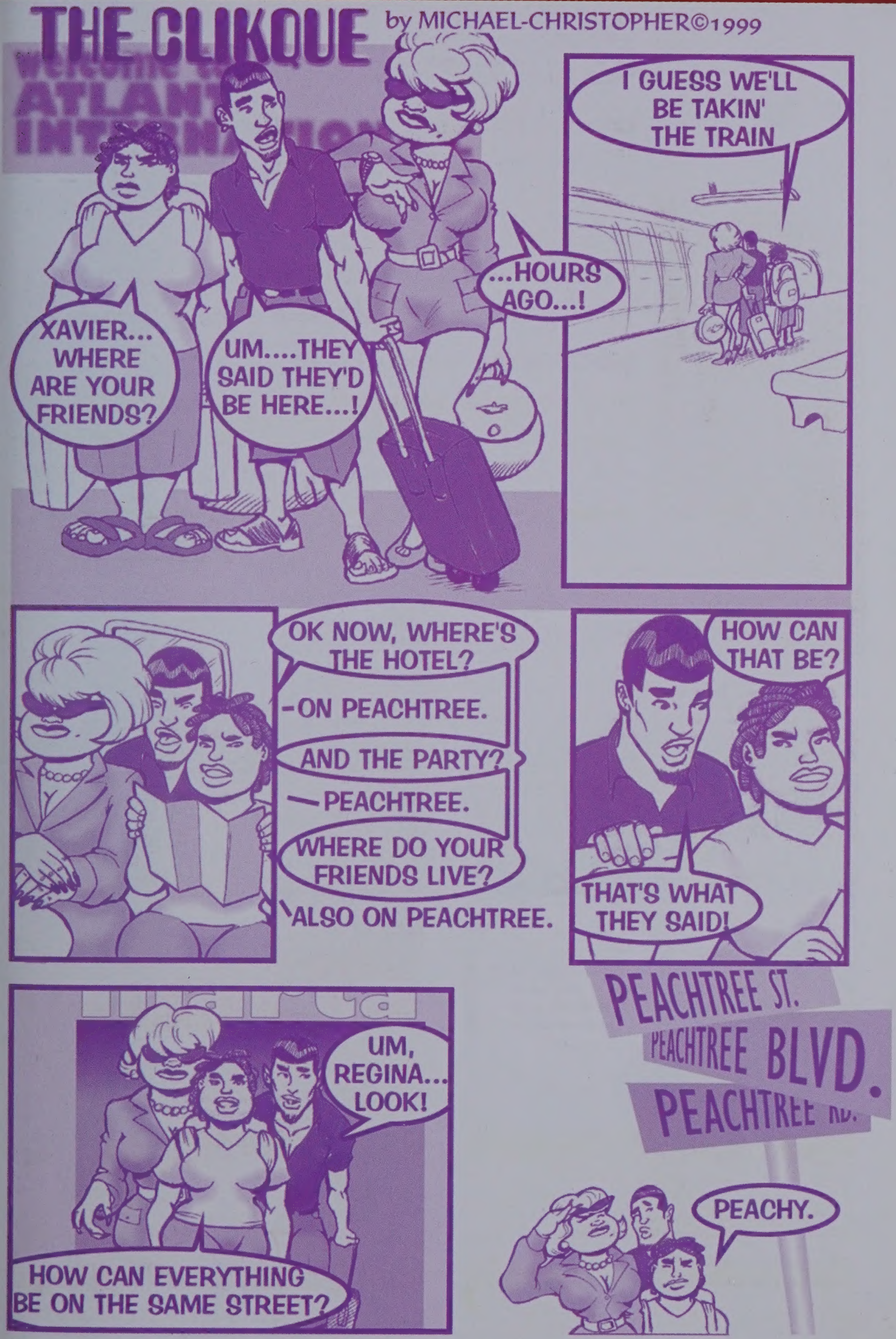
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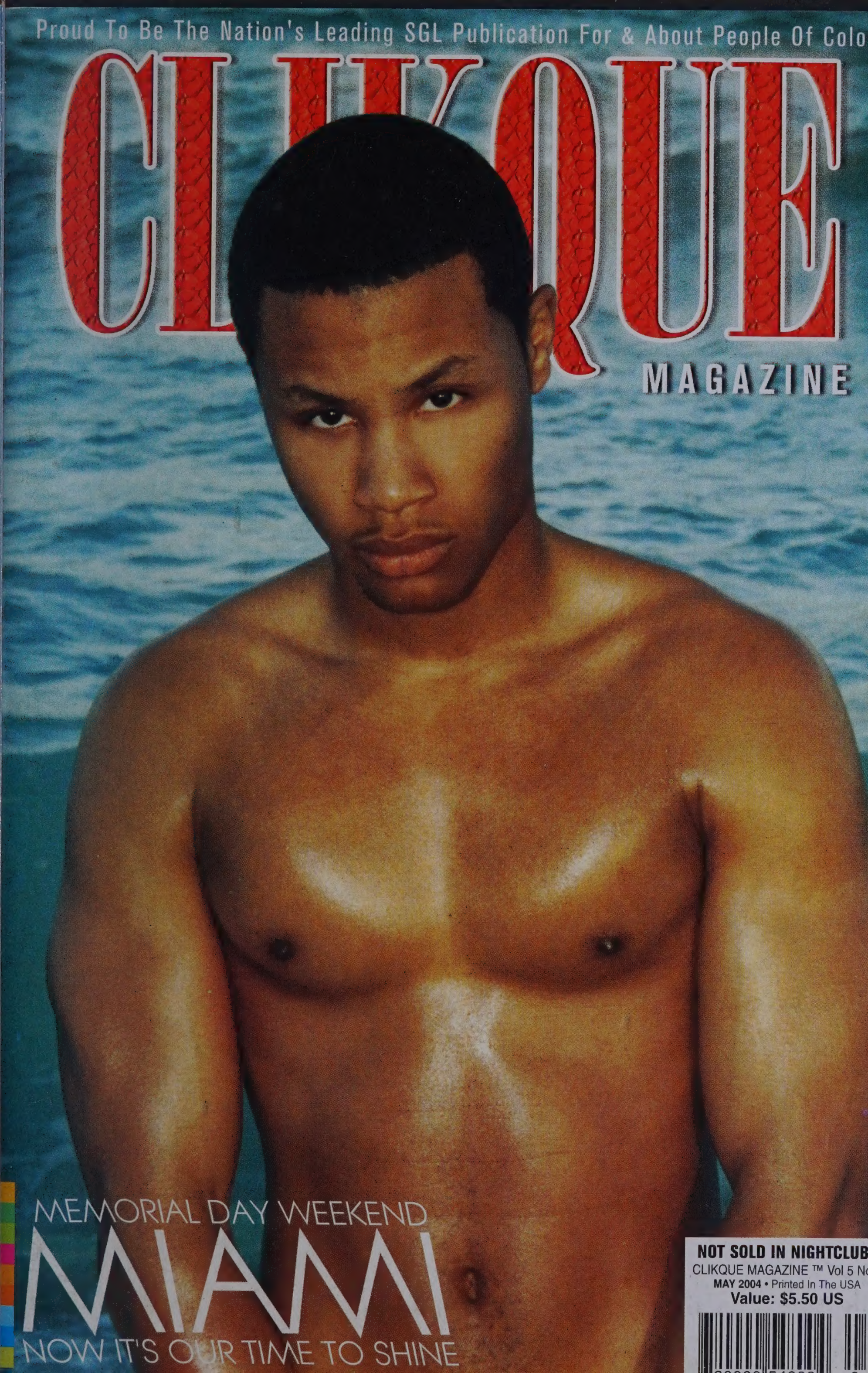

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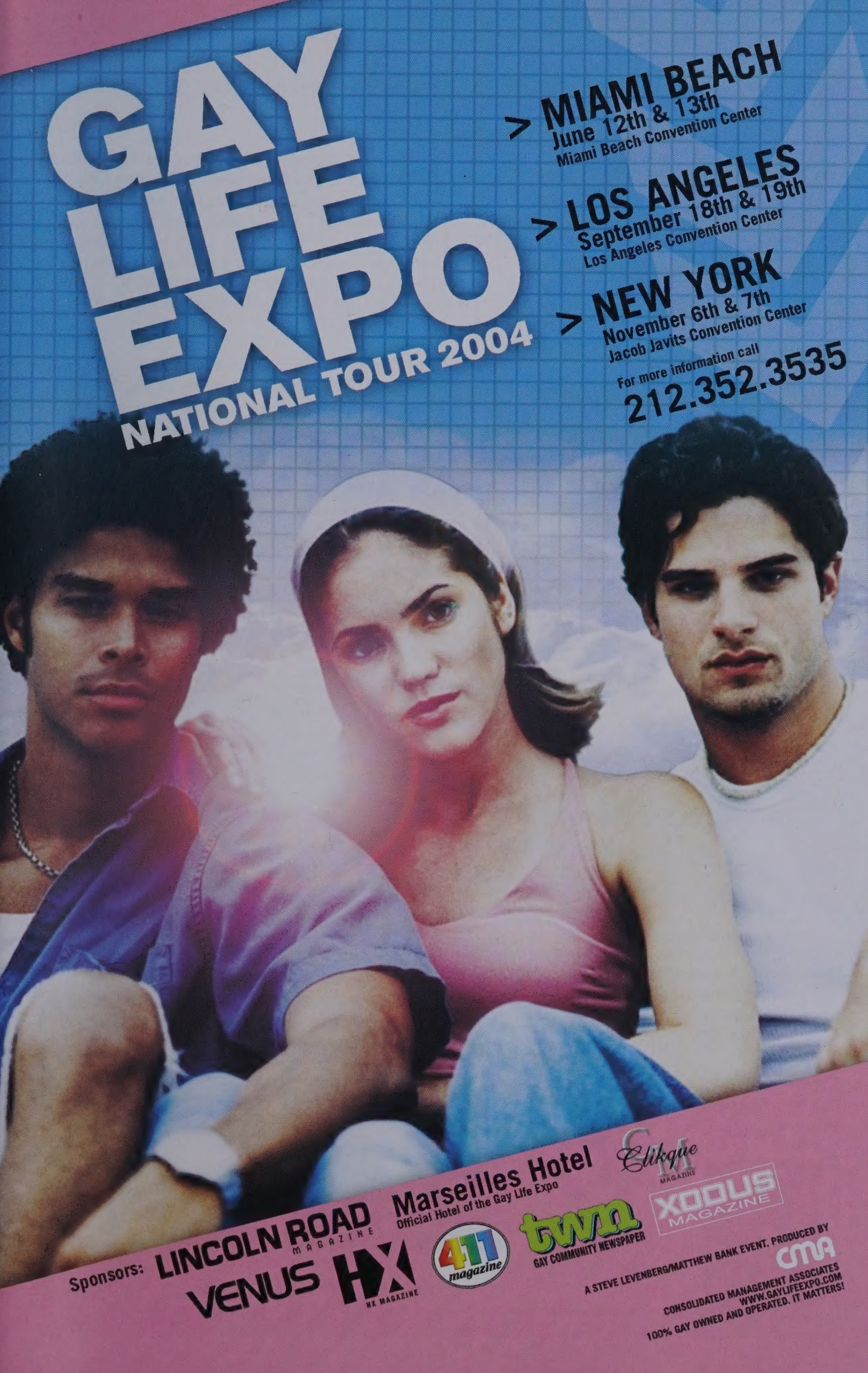

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EDITORIAL

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE — MAY 1998 THRU MAY 2004

Clikque MAGAZINE

Hello Clikque readers. This month marks 6 years that I have been publishing Clikque Magazine. Despite a few setbacks that resulted in our 2 year hiatus, this past January we returned on the scene better and stronger than ever...without loosing a beat. We've managed to regain our readership base, support from our advertisers and loyal subscribers. For this we are most grateful.

I have been in this business for a long time now and have traveled many roads. Along the way, there have been good experiences and there have been bad ones as well. Through it all, I have learned a great deal from all of the decisions made as Publisher of Clikque Magazine. With these experiences, I pledge to make Clikque Magazine even more reliable, reader friendly, entertaining and informative on issues relevant to our community.

The absence of Clikque has shown all of us that it is indeed an extremely valuable vehicle that plays a crucial role in bridging black gay communities through the country. Know that you also play a vital role in the stability, growth and strength of Clikque. Therefore, I ask that you continue to inform your friends about us. Continue to send articles, and continue to encourage businesses in you community to support this magazine that's provided to you at no cost (in most areas).

Thanks for your support and I look forward to bringing you the Nation's Premiere Magazine For and About Same Gender Loving People of Color.

Dwight Powell

Sincere thanks to the following individuals that have worked tirelessly for Clikque Magazine over the years. Thanks for continuing to support me to this day.

Dwight Powell
Founder / Editor-In-Chief
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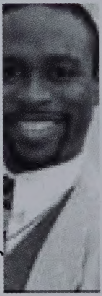
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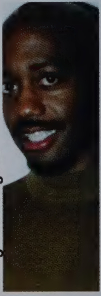
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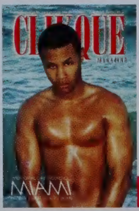

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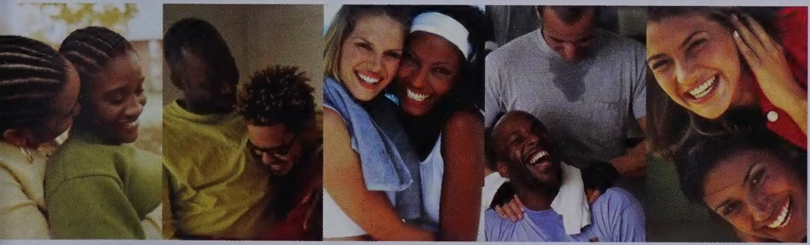

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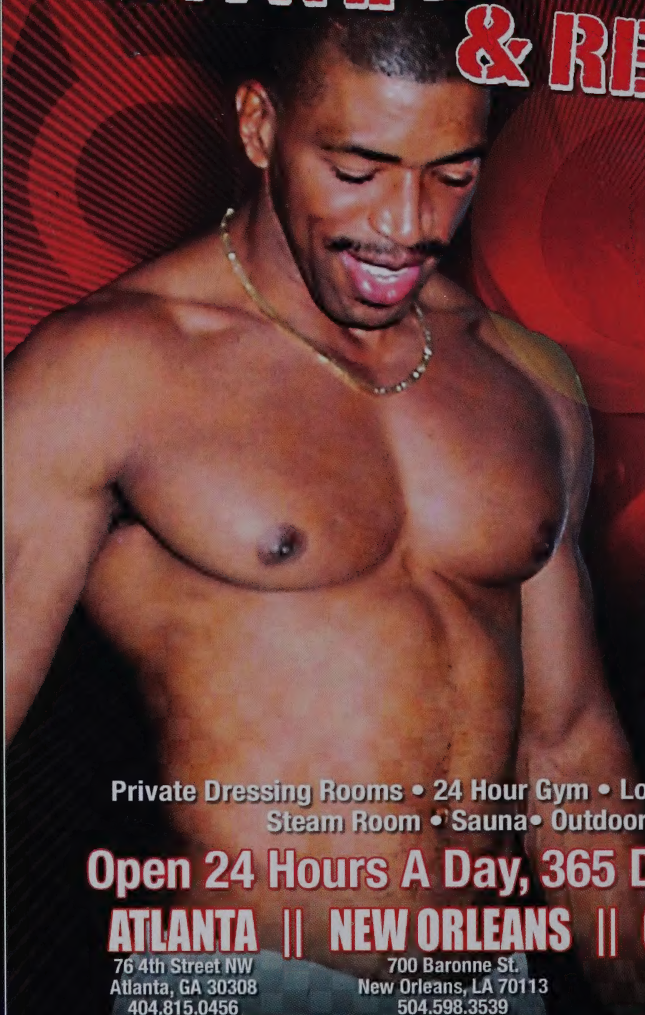

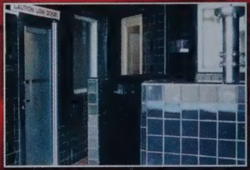

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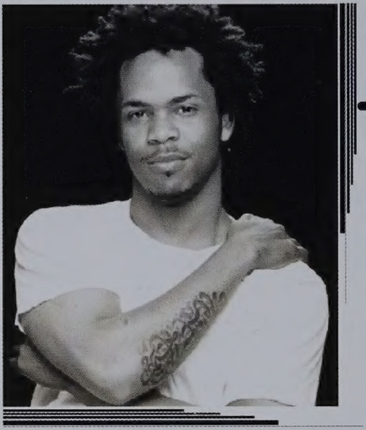

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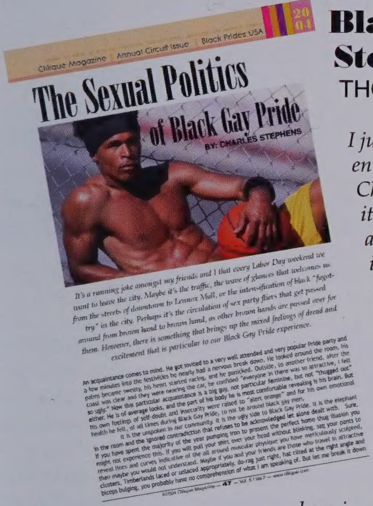
BY TONY WINSTON

Letters To The Editor



Clikque Magazine | Annual Circuit Issue | Black Prides USA

20 04

The Sexual Politics of Black Gay Pride

BY: CHARLES STEPHENS

It's a running joke amongst my friends and I that every Labor Day weekend we want to leave the city. Maybe it's the traffic, the wave of glances that welcomes us from the streets of downtown to Lennox Mall, or the intensification of black "fugot-try" in the city. Perhaps it's the circulation of sex party fliers that get passed around from brown hand to brown hand, as other brown hands are passed over for them. However, there is something that brings up the mixed feelings of dread and excitement that is particular to our Black Gay Pride experience.

An acquaintance comes to mind. He got invited to a very well attended and very popular Pride party and a few minutes into the festivities he nearly had a nervous break down. He looked around the room, his palms became sweaty, his heart started racing, and he panicked. Outside, to another friend, after the coast was clear and they were nearing the car, he confided "everyone in there was so attractive, I felt so ugly." Now this particular acquaintance is a big guy, not particular feminine, but not "thugged out" either. He is of average looks, and the part of his body he is most comfortable revealing is his brain. But his own feelings of self-doubt and insecurity were raised to "alert orange" and for his own emotional health he felt, of all times during Black Gay Pride, to not be around black gay men.

It is the unspoken in our community. It is the ugly side to Black Gay Pride. It is the elephant in the room and the ignored contradiction that refuses to be acknowledged let alone dealt with. Sure, If you have spent the majority of the year pumping iron to present the perfect homo thug illusion you might not experience this. If you will pull your shirt over your head without blinking, sag your pants to reveal lines and curves indicative of the all around muscular physique you have meticulously sculpted, then maybe you would not understand. Maybe if you and your friends are those who travel in attractive clusters, Timberlands laced or unlaced appropriately, do-rag just right, hat tilted at the right angle and biceps bulging, you probably have no comprehension of what I am speaking of. But let me break it down

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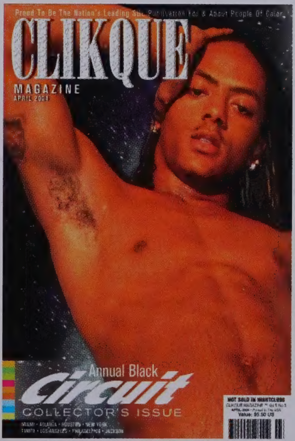
The Sexual Politics of the Black Gay Pride by Charles Stephens. I JUST WANTED TO SAY I THOUGHT HE HIT IT RIGHT ON THE NOSE.

I just read the article in the April edition of Clikque Mag, entitled "The Sexual Politics of the Black Gay Pride by Charles Stephens. I just wanted to say I thought he hit it right on the nose. Black gay pride has not really been about black gay people feeling proud to be who they are, instead its a continued reminder of how some of us are not cute enough or muscle enough or financially stable enough to be excepted by certain type of people. I had assumed that gay pride would be a time to mingle and meet other gay men, make new friends maybe even a special somebody. but its gotten away from that for the most part. I myself have a very toned body and have been told that im very sexy looking but it hurts me that sometimes that all that matters with certain groups of people and of course here in atl there is always someone better looking so one flaw and u could be dismissed for the next guy, its sad and I hope this type of treatment of our brotha's and sisters end soon. but I think its a result of the sexual explosion that has taken over in this country, u see it everyday in movies , TV, and music videos, sex is the main focus in getting peoples attention and the more sex appeal u have the more attention u will get, so now in the gay community if u are masculine with a tight body or a pretty boi thug type, u will get the positive attention and if u are not in that category than u are ignored and over looked and isolated, its wrong and hurtful and somehow we have to make a change but how do we do it, u know I love my body and the attention I get in the spring when I put on a tank top or muscle shirt, but I knew that type of attention would not give me the self esteem that I was lacking, for me it was my faith in God and realizing that a good attitude on life and treating people with love and kindness is the true link to being happy and happy people don't hate on others just because they don't look a certain way, I pray that more and more of us in the life can appreciate the difference in the gay community whether a person is fem or overweight or just average, we need to stop judging and start looking at people for what's in there heart, everyone we meet may not be a lover or mate but just maybe they can be a friend who knows, I have overweight friends I have fem friends muscle friends pretty boi wanna be thug friends lol and i love em all, and would not change anything about them. well almost anything :) please thank Mr. Stephens for touching on this subject, I hope and pray that enough people read the article and take the message to heart, I know I did,

--Tony Winston
faithful clikque reader

This is in response to the article " The Sexual Politics of Black Gay Pride." First let me say it was well written and past time it was noticed. I agree with the author totally. I am what most

CONTINUES ON PAGE 11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CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE
APRIL 2004
Annual Black
Circuit
COLLECTOR'S ISSUE
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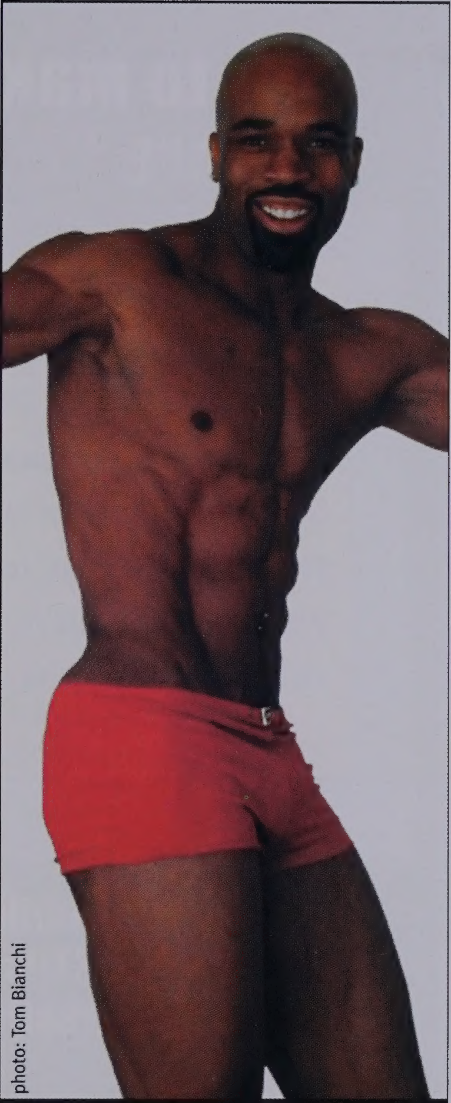
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

people consider handsome, cute, or sexy (depending on the season) but like a lot of Pride attendees I still feel the need to compare myself against others that are in attendance. Pride is a time for black gay men to realize that the beauty of our gayness and blackness does not lie in dress, attitude, or prowess but in the understanding and developing of our community. I applaud Clikque's effort to discuss a topic that has a large impact on the divisiveness of our community. My friends and I do not celebrate Black Pride because we feel the events are aimed at the "DL" crowd or "sex party" crowd. We have attended some of the workshops and they simply have no pizazz -- no interests. The message is always the same -- HIV/AIDS prevention -- now undoubtedly we do need to continue to be educated the this epidemic but when will the event cover things we deal with everyday. It may be hard for some to believe, but there are black gay men that deal with other issues besides HIV/AIDS. Issues dealing with same sex relationships of color and how to maintain them, how "DL" not only affecting black heterosexual women but the toll its taking on our black gay men their quest for monogamus relationships and putting them at risk, the demand for equal rights to gay marriage because contrary to what most young black gay men think they too will soon like to eventually settle with the person of their choice, and host of other issues on social and psychological areas that directly affect our community. My advice to In The Life Atlanta is if clubbin and sex parties have the highest attendance then thats where the social, pschological, and health concern messages need to be -- whether by print, television, radio or D.J. booth. We have to find new ways to reach our communities especially those members that feel they are not a part of same-sex loving community (i.e. "DL"). Thank you Clikque for unwanning fight to inform our communities about social issues that impact us as a whole.

- Damond Sharlow

Send Letters To The Editor To
clikque1@aol.com



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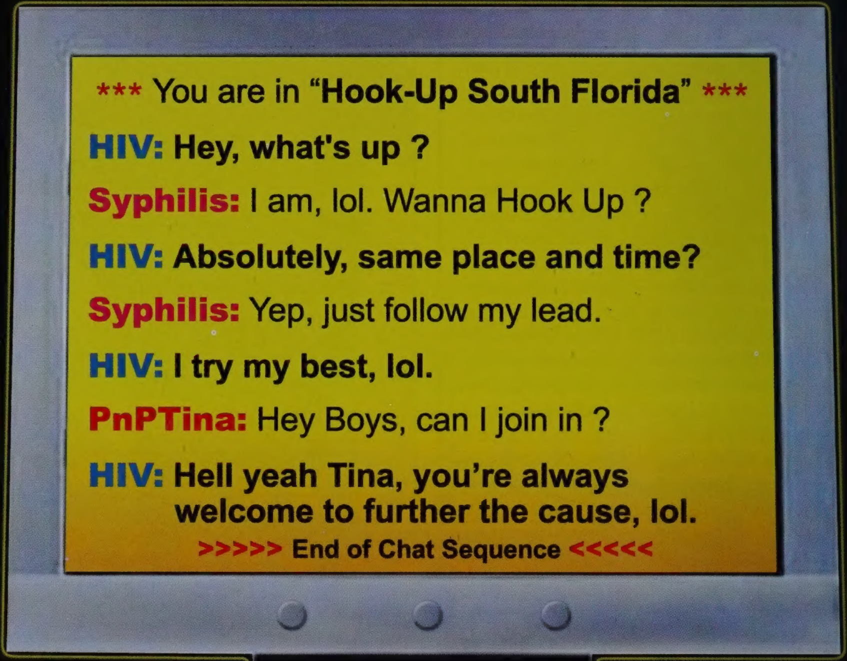

*** You are in "**Hook-Up South Florida**" ***

HIV: **Hey, what's up ?**

Syphilis: I am, lol. Wanna Hook Up ?

HIV: **Absolutely, same place and time?**

Syphilis: Yep, just follow my lead.

HIV: **I try my best, lol.**

PnPTina: Hey Boys, can I join in ?

HIV: **Hell yeah Tina, you're always welcome to further the cause, lol.**

>>>>> **End of Chat Sequence** <<<<<

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HEALTH

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It doesn't matter what kind of loving you're getting. You might be in a monogamous relationship, doing the dating or mating dance with one or several (or lots and lots) of partners, but the question is the same. How and when -- if ever -- do you have the, "Have you been tested?" conversation.

What the Law Says

- Did you know that some states have laws concerning HIV disclosure? To find out what the laws are in your state regarding HIV disclosure, STD exposure, sodomy and more, visit the Web site for the HIV Criminal Law and Policy Project.
- After all, knowledge about our partners' sexual history and status is one barometer of risk, regardless of our own HIV or STD status.

But the conversation is easier said than done.

"I just think it's something most people don't want to talk about. They would rather not deal with it than confront the awkwardness of asking," says Taylor*, a 39 year old photographer who lives in New York City. "Asking someone in a bar would be horribly awkward," he adds.

The scary fact is a lot of men who have sex with men (MSM) trust sexual partners to disclose their HIV status -- and make determinations about risk based on what partners say -- according to findings in the report Vital Statistics 2002, the sixth annual Gay Men's Sex Survey.

Men were recruited for the survey, conducted by Sigma Research in partnership with 119 health promotion agencies across the United Kingdom, at Pride events, on the Internet, and using booklets that were distributed to HIV health promoters working with MSM.

> It comes down to the message we've all heard a zillion times, I know. Use condoms!

Although we have observed an overall decrease in recent years, expectations that men with HIV will tell a prospective sexual partner their HIV status are still very wide-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 14

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

spread," according to a report. "Over a third of all men not tested HIV positive both expected a positive partner to disclose their status prior to sex and would not want to then have sex if they did."

It's one thing to decide not to ask, but why trust people to tell you, especially when they know you may not have sex with them after they disclose their status?

Taylor says if you're having safer sex, you don't necessarily need to ask the question, but assuming your partner is HIV-negative may lead to risk taking that otherwise wouldn't occur.

"It's much easier to discuss HIV status online when you're meeting partners. That's easy, it's not as awkward to do," says Taylor. "It's pretty common in the online dialogue to ask about HIV status. In fact, profiles usually address it so you don't even have to ask," he says.

But as the study authors warn, "in this climate, it is difficult to see what incentive men with HIV have for disclosing their HIV status."

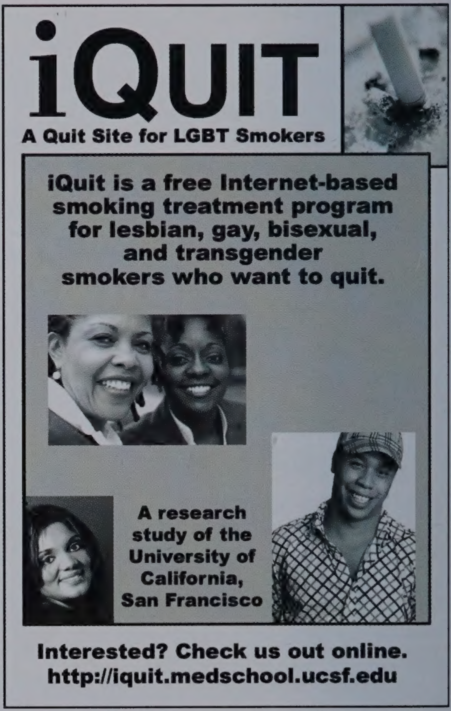
Not to mention the reality that some men may not be honest, or may not have been tested in a long time. The fact is Taylor hasn't been tested in a long time -- he won't say just how long -- and he considers himself negative, despite some concern.

That's why researchers say educating people about the reality that some men with HIV won't disclose -- or don't know -- their status is a huge and necessary part of future HIV prevention efforts. "Disabusing negative and untested men of the notion that positive HIV disclosure will happen (and that their risk assessments can be based on such an assumption) remains a vital health promotion aim," the survey authors wrote.

It comes down to the message we've all heard a zillion times, I know. Use condoms.

The survey also found that discrimination, harassment and abuse remains a huge problem for MSM. "Despite advances in social and political equality, everyday cruelty and harassment of gay and bisexual men continues. A third of all men had been verbally abused in the last year. One-in-four has experienced discrimination from strangers in public (verbal and physical abuse) with the workplace being the next most common site of abuse and discrimination."

While some people may make no connection between homophobia and risk taking, the synergy between the two seems evident. "You try being in the closet for much of your adult life," Taylor says. When you finally get to the point when you are out and having sex, after missing your adolescence, and a large part of adulthood, he explains, you don't want to deal with HIV and other downers when you have sex. But the cost of ignoring such issues might be your life.



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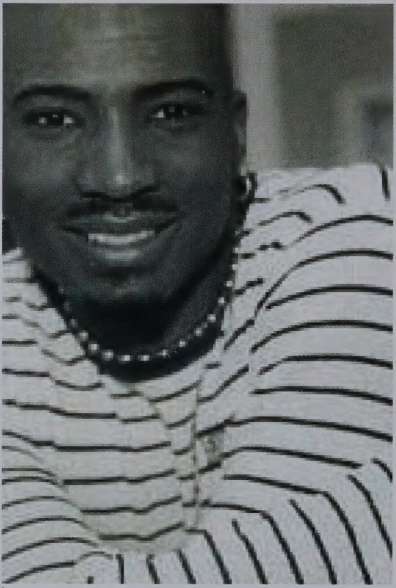
By SCOTTIE ROBINSON



Wake-up Call!

Sleeper cells - its time to arise, shine and unite. Right now, across the United States Legislators and Christian Coalitions have forged an alliance to expedite the elimination of your rights and privileges as American citizens. First, it was the enslaved Africans, then it was the Jewish, and now discrimination is resting on the doorstep of same gender loving people.

History like time has a way of revealing its truth to us over and over again. Repeating the same cycle is supposed to be a spiritual journey upwards to our highest love vibration. However, when you target a group of people, and create special laws to deny these persons their god given right to pursue a positive life, filled with happiness, love, liberty, and secure employment - you have committed discrimination.

As we come to yet another opportunity for America to seek a higher level of love consciousness, fear, prejudice and greed have united with its former enemy - the Black Clergy. Some of the same Black Preachers who inspired thousands to civil action have now become the Pharisees advocating the elimination of the Outcasts by supporting special laws created for the purpose of discrimination against Black same gender loving people. Whatever happened to loving thy neighbor as thyself?

I am sure most racists and bigots are laughing at the hypocrisy of Black Mothers and Fathers who would deny their very own children unconditional love. Whether Black same gender loving people are born this way, made this way by others, or have chosen this experience of their own free will - please don't forget the lesson of "Operation: Perpetual Enslavement." Remember? Separate the young from the old, the women from the men, the fair skin from the dark skin, the house nigger from the field nigger, and the gay from the straight. Next, use legislators to establish laws to maintain a system of discrimination; then use the approved clergy to justify oppression with the Bible we gave them. And while they are fighting amongst themselves for control of the crumbs, we'll take the whole pie. Remember? If you can deny one group of peoples their basic human rights, with the help of another minority group, then you can systematically discriminate against all.

Sleeper cells - Its time to arise and shine and unite. Do you know who you are? You have heard what they've said about

CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

tuesdays

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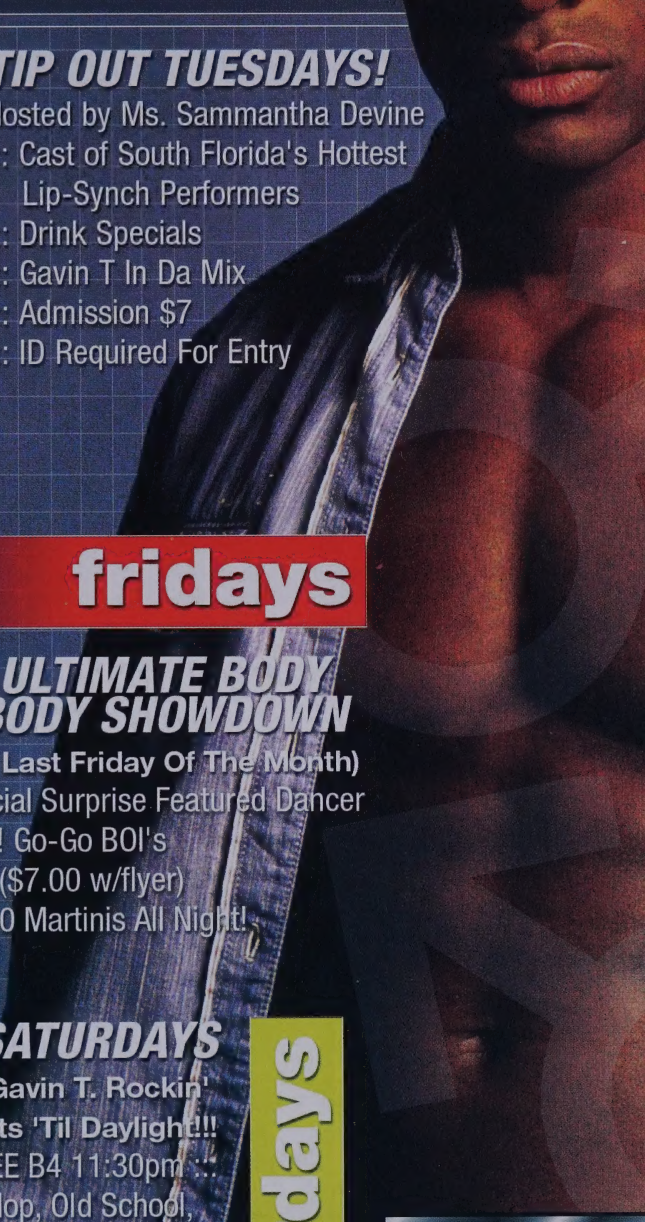

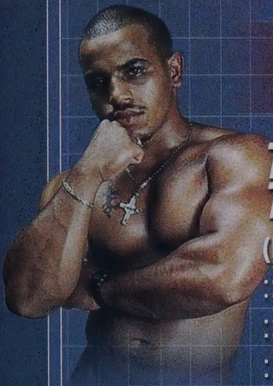

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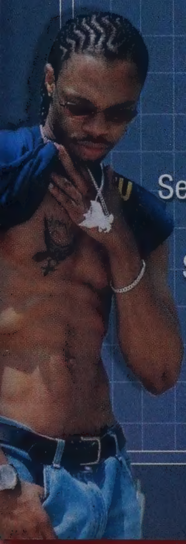

saturdays

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By SCOTTIE ROBINSON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

you, but kept silent. You have seen their mistreatment of us, but you have turned a blind eye. You have known the power of same gender love, but because of fear and prejudice you have refused to share it with your family, friends and loved ones. Now is the time to arise and speak-up for yourself! Now is the time to let your love shine so bright it frightens the powerful and liberates the Outcasts. Now is the time for unity and collective action! Wake-up. Wake-up.

We need 10,000 sleeper cells to join with us Labor Day for Atlanta's Black Pride March 2004, to make one last eleventh hour appeal to the heart consciousness of mainstream Black America. Creating special laws to stop same gender loving people from the right to express love for one another through marriage is discrimination. This blatant attack on the 14th amendment only serves the needs of the elite power structure and unequivocally repeats the cycle of discrimination.

Sleeper cells - arise, shine and unite. This year's Atlanta Black Pride March is the opportunity of a lifetime. With 10,000 Black LGBT Angels marching for freedom of expression we can send a clear and concise message to the Black church that we are here we are not invisible, and refuse to allow our black brothers and sisters to live in ignorance any longer. Come-out sleeper cells, come-out of the closet!! Your Black LGBT brothas and sistahs need to see your face and document your spiritual journey upward. What are you doing to Stand-up & Represent? Are you Black, Out & Proud?

Stand-up & Represent so you might be able fight oppression loudly & passionately.

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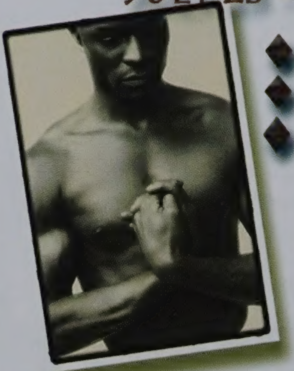

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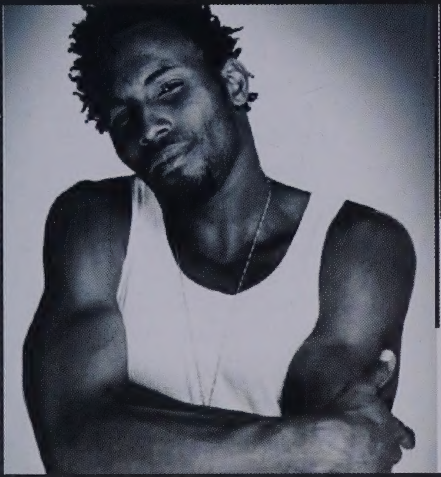

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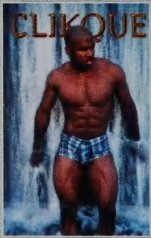
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY CLIKQUE
MAY 1998 - MAY 2004

OUR HISTORY

Taylor Mabrie
MAY1998

Kimla Mouton
JUN1998

Whitney Mugler
JUL1998



George King
AUG/SEPT1998

Lance Forrest
OCT1998

Clikque Magazine began publishing 6 year ago in Houston Texas, when an astute businessman and graphic artist extraordinaire, Dwight Powell and literary genius, Lewis Nicholson.

Powell, although relatively new to the gay media arena, was however no stranger to the design and print industry. While employed with Homes & Land Publishing Corporation, the Houston Chronicle and Houston Creative Connection, Powell gained vast knowledge and experience that would prove necessary for his future endeavors, which were to one day own his own publication and publishing company. One of those dreams has been realized and he will soon be working on the other.

Lewis Nicholson is a graduate of the City University Of New York(Brooklyn College)where he earned a degree in Journalism and Philosophy and a minor in Economics. He published a magazine called Clikque out of New York city much along the same lines as the new more sophisticated magazine that you are reading today.

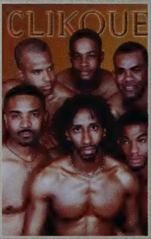
At their first meeting they decided to keep the name Clikque though the New Magazine would be much more comprehensive and graphically superior. One must agree that the name Clikque is easy to remember and a sure winner. Besides, Nicholson was insistent that the name Clikque was worth gold.

Dwight Powell, was rather disenchanted with the publications that were available for and representing our black gay and lesbian community.

Although there were a few good publications such as Venus, SBC and Whazzup, these publications weren't readily available in his own community, which was Houston at the time. Mr Powell shared with us how he grew increasingly annoyed with the lack of black representation in

Pepper LaBeija
NOV1998

Monté St. James
Terrance
DEC1998



Anthony, BJ, Jemahld
Chaka, Billy & Carlos
JAN1999

CM
Hotter Than July
Rod Martin
FEB1999

Necole Luv Dupree
MAR1999

the gay media. Publications such as This Week in Texas (TWIT) and Houston Voice , both Houston publications rarely features the Black Gay community. And when they do, it's normally around black history month or Juneteenth. What's even more annoying, says Powell, "when we are recognized or given some sort of representation, it's normally not very tasteful or dignified."

In November of 1997, Powell decided that it would have to take a black person to truly and tastefully represent his own his black, gay, lesbian, and transgendered community. Rethinking lessons taught many moons ago in his marketing class at Florida State University, Powell began his market segmentation, demographic studies and probing on how to succeed in this arena. Confronted with the knowledge that most new publications go "belly-up" within the first six months, Powell was driven to do everything that would be necessary in an attempt to realize his dreams.

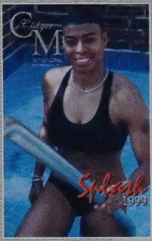
After two months of planning, Powell was eager and ready to unveil his new product named FRESH, a full-color, glossy digest sized magazine for African Americans in the life. Well, as you know by now, Dwight did not name his magazine FRESH. Instead, it was named CLIKQUE and Lewis became his partner. In January of 1998, Mr Powell informed Derrick Miles a good friend of his, who also resided in Houston, of his plans to publish a magazine. Ironically, Miles was a friend of Nicholson's. Lewis Nicholson once published a magazine out of New York by the name of CLIKQUE. "Although reluctant at first, I am really glad that Lewis convinced me, to use the name CLIKQUE, it is very unique and rather catchie", says Powell.

The name Clikque is actually a derivative of the word Clique because it was representative of a group of friend(a Clique) from Prospects Heights Brooklyn who started the old magazine bearing that name.The k was inserted for aesthetic purposes.

While still employed as a graphic artist and working 50+ hours a week at Houston Creative Connection, Powell sold ads during his lunch breaks and created them at night while Nicholson During this period wrote and collected articles. With an extremely reduced social life, They both became obsessed and engrossed in CLIKQUE Magazine. For them, this was truly a labor of love, filled with anticipation and excitement.

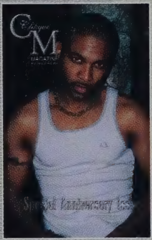
On Tuesday April 26, 1998 Clikque Magazine was launched at Rascals The Nightclub, in Houston Texas. In the company of most of his friends and colleagues, Dwight Powell along with Lewis Nicholson unveiled a product that would today become the nations leading publication for African-Americans "in the life". "This was probably the proudest moment in my life",

APRIL1999



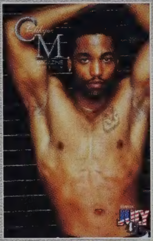
Sandy

MAY1999



Dwight Powell

JUN1999



Maceo

JUL1999

Clikque
CM
Magazine
Hotter Than July
Detroit MI — July 18-25

Carl Dvgve

AUG1999

Clikque
CM
Magazine

Cory Scott

Mr. Powell recalls. "I did exactly what I wanted to do, and that was to produce a nice, color, glossy, quality publication for all black people to be proud of. There were a lot of people in attendance that were very excited for us and eagerly welcomed this magazine that was so desperately needed in the area." says Powell.

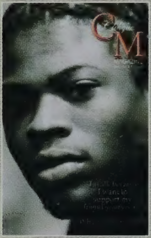
The Magazine has come a long way since May of 1998. According to the duo, there were many that didn't think that the magazine in its current format would survive. Many conceded that producing a 32 page magazine, especially a black magazine on a monthly basis would be almost impossible in Houston. It is easy to understand why folks had those thoughts, for one, gaining the support of the black gay community and businesses is very difficult, especially when that community is so closeted. The locals in Houston fell in love with the magazine instantly, but unfortunately the support from the business sectors would not follow. Undoubtably, Dwight and Lewis had the best product on the market, but the gay businesses, which where predominantly white owned, didn't feel as though there was a market for them to tap into.

There where so many times that Dwight Powell wanted to throw in the towel and call it quits. Month after month he continued to loose thousands and thousands of dollars, fought numerous battles with folks that attempted to weaken his working relationship with Lewis Nicholson as they also tried to destroy and defame the magazine. At the same time, it was a constant struggle hiding from the community, the difficulties that he and the magazine were experiencing.

Dwight recalls that had it not been for Grover Fortenberry at Rascals, Clikque Magazine probably wouldn't be here today. In the early days, Rascals accounted for almost 50% of the paid advertisements in the magazine, and for this the owner and staff at Clikque Magazine are extremely grateful. Also instrumental in the survival of the magazine in the early days was

SEPT1999

Taj



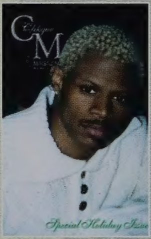
OCT1999

AID Atlanta
AIDS Walk Campaign

CM
The Fall Fashion Issue

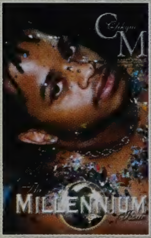
NOV1999

Nestor Zapata



DEC1999

Andre Mizrahi



JAN2000

Thomas

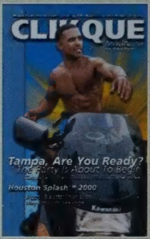
FEB2000

"Trois" Cast

CLIKQUE
BOLD New Look
Teryl-Lynn & Tim

MAR2000

Teryl-Lynn Foxx
Tim Bolhar

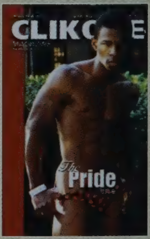


APRIL2000

Lil Red

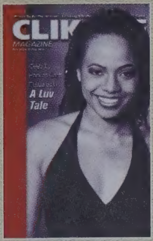
MAY2000

Dwight Powell



JUNE2000

Persuation


CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE
A Luv Tale

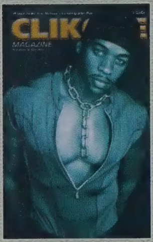
JULY2000

Gina Davis (from Show Girls)

CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE

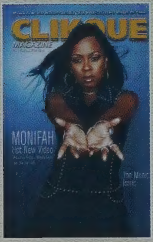
AUG2000

ATL Blk Pride


CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE

SEPT2000

Ashante


CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE
MONIFAH

FEB2001

Monifah

CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE
BOLD
NEW LOOK
STASHA

MAR2001

Stasha Sanchez

Nestor Zapata, then companion of Dwight Powell and Derrick Miles from Incognito The Club. Derrick proved to be a good advisor to Powell on positive directions in which to take the magazine.

But, the long term goals and aspirations that Powell had envisioned for his magazine would not be realized by two clubs in Houston. That's when he decided to move the magazine to Atlanta, a vibrant and prime market ready for such a publication. By this time, Nicholson wasn't very active in the day to day operation of the magazine and his working relationship with Powell had grown to the point of being almost non existent.

At first Lewis wasn't very enchanted about the idea of Dwight moving the magazine, until he later agreed that the magazine had reached its peak in Houston and that Atlanta was the best move the magazine could make. One week later, in a very bold move, Dwight left his most reliable source of income, in search of a dream which he hoped to be realized in the ATL and the rest is history.

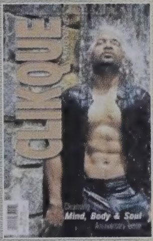
Right away, Clikque became a big hit in Atlanta. The magazine was warmly and graciously received by the late David Hampton from TRAXX nightclub and the folks at In The Life Atlanta, a community based organization for African-Americans "In The Life". Initially, when Clikque moved its headquarters to Atlanta, it had a page count of 40 pages with a few ads. Last month the magazine peaked to a page count of 80 pages featuring ads from businesses all over America. Clikque is distributed at bookstores, nightclubs and other establishments in every state in the country. WOW!

By far, Clikque is now the most recognized and respected publication about and for same gender loving folks. Since it's inception, Clikque has been the official guide of many prestigious events, prides and circuit parties.

CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE
The Circuit Issue

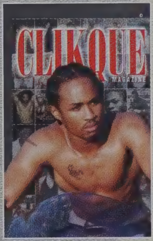
APR2001

Houston Splash


CLIKQUE
Mind, Body & Soul

MAY2001

Dwight Powell


CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE

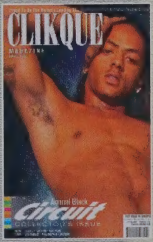
JAN2004

Shawn Mucker

CLIKQUE
MAGAZINE

FEB/MAR2004

Kassie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circuit

APR2004

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Starring Cover Hottie
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From The Dirty Dirty: Atlanta, Georgia
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Including The Return Of Sexy Ass
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Bonus Feature
LATIN FEVER
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SUBSCRIPTION FORM ON PAGE 45

ASK Bianca

Bianca is interested in helping you solve some of the greater mysteries of life. Write her at
Clikque Magazine,931 South Park Road, Suite 105, Hollywood FL 33021
Or email her C/o Clikque1@aol.com

Hello kids,
Welcome back to Axk (Ask) Bianca here at Clikque Magazine. I really enjoyed my time spent in Jail and gyrlls let me tell you. I had every man there in the palms of my hands and I mean that literally. I went in a gyrll and came out a muscle bound hunkasaurus. My boyfriends love the new me. One claims that there is nothing better than screwing a real man. I never thought of myself as a real man but, what ever! I am pleased to announce that I am no longer on crack and I rarely use speed anymore. My new best friend is miss Betty Ford and I met Monica Lewinsky on my way from court one day. Now I am filing a case against the president because I was told that he was trying to make a pass on my picture as he was going through my FBI files one day. Anyway I am happy to be back and this month I am responding to your letters written before I was carted off to the Island ...(Rikers) in that nice blue and white carriage driven by two of New York's finest. Oh, by the way I moved to Miami with the Publishers of this rag but I am going to run right back to Atlanta if I don't get what I came here for.

Dear Bianca,
I am a 27yr-old black successful male. I've been dating my girl for 4 years and we are planning on getting married this June. Recently at the gym, I was propositioned by a guy and I told him I did not swing that way. However, I have been thinking about him ever since. I love my girl with all my heart but I have been having dreams about that dude. Bianka does this mean I am attracted to guys? What should I do. Do I tell my future wife? Damn, why is life so confusing.
Dreaming of biceps.

Dear Dreaming of biceps,
You need to come to terms with your self. I don't believe for a minute that this is the first time that you have found yourself thinking about dick. Do you think straight men who are propositioned by other men find themselves thinking about men from there on? Lies! I am afraid that you should take this guy up on his offer if you haven't already and have yourself a good time in the bulging biceps of another man. Trust me on this, it feels real good. You do not love your girl with all your heart because there is no such thing. You need to tell her that you find a man attractive and that her biceps are not big enough. Tell her to find a straight man, even though he won't be as good as you are in bed. About your being attracted to guys, do you really need my advice? If you are not attracted to guys then I don't know what your obsession is with this man's biceps. By the power invested in me I now declare you a full fledged faggot.

Dear Bianca,
Recently my boyfriend was hospitalized. Although I never asked, he volunteered to me that while he was in the hospital he tested negative for HIV. Three days ago I was in his house reading a magazine and there was a letter in it from his physician stating that he was positive for the HIV virus. I feel betrayed because he lied to me and I didn't ask in the first place. I will support him no matter what. Should I tell him that I know? What should I do?
Dazed and confused Chicago, Illinois.

Now, Miss Gyrll in Illinois,
You Midwestern kids slay me. You just happened to be reading a magazine in your mans house, and out jumps this doctors note with his HIV status and it lands directly in your face, at eye level. You were not snooping around and you had no idea he could be positive. Where exactly did you find the note, you lying queen? You and I both know that you cannot tell this man of your findings until he tells, you because you are likely to get a severe ass whoppin. He lied to you because he knew you would not be able to handle the truth. You feel betrayed? Ha! How do you think he is going to feel when he finds out that you went through his personal files. Come clean with your boyfriend and tell him the truth. Even though you are not used to doing so, it feels good. He may or may not dump your ass but I am sure you will be able to handle it. Try to keep your messy life clean in "98"

Dear Bianca,
My roommates and I are all light skinned and beautiful and we get along with everyone just fine. We are smart, intelligent, funny and genuinely sweet people. We have friends of all persuasions, races, shades of blackness and degrees of intelligence. Lately we have found ourselves having to defend our beauty based on our skin color. Some darker complexioned friends of ours have been taking issue with us claiming that, we are no longer associating with them. We had to cut some people off and push others to a far corner, but these decisions were not based on skin color, they were based on these peoples manners and attitudes. Too bad they happened to be dark skinned blacks. Now, we have to live with the legacy of having people talk about, how we think we are all that, because we are light skinned and beautiful. How do we cut these people off and restore our good name as the fun loving open minded individuals that we are.
Light skinned and Beautiful in Houston.

Dear L S and B in H-town,
Your letter has a very shady tone and I doubt that you are as sweet as you think you are. I smell something funky, your breath maybe? I wish you had sent a picture of your beauty because I think you are confusing light skinned with being beautiful. The two are not one and the same and should never be used interchangeably. They can be complementary but they are not substitutes. I tend to believe that your friends are right, and that you cut those loose who were not yellow enough for your liking. You ought to be ashamed of yourself and go apologize to those nice darker skinned friends of yours and beg them to take you back as a friend. How convenient that your roommates all happen to be light skinned. You southern girls are a trip and I can't wait to get my hands on a few of your behinds and slap some sense into your feeble minds. On the other hand you have every right to cut anyone loose without a viable reason, just be strong enough to deal with the consequences. When all the party invites go passing by your address don't sit and wonder why, you already know the reason. How ever if you are indeed a good person I would suggest that you take the situation to your God or buy those friends of yours something fierce, something Cartier, Mugler or Vivian Westwood may do the trick.
Good luck! Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I've been involved in a commuter relationship for the last six months. My boyfriend lives in New York and I live in Washington DC. We enjoy spending time with one another, sharing, giving, quiet moments, and each other's com-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 26

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

pany. We are totally into one another. We connect on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level. We attend church together. I am very religious and very involved in the church. He is somewhat religious. Bianca, our love making is out of this world. We can't get enough of each other. It is incredible but sometimes after sex I feel guilty and conflicted. Recently, I interrupted our lovemaking because I just felt that something wasn't right. I love my boyfriend, but I love God more. I want to please God and the things that we do are not pleasing to God. I think that my guilt and apparent contradiction are driving him away. I am causing a lot of stress in our relationship. I don't want to lose my boyfriend. I want what we have and share. Bianca, what should I do.
Conflicted.

Dearest Conflicted.
Your problem is not uncommon. Quite frankly, it is the most popular crisis the kids are facing these days. Everyone has gotten so religious, but the gay lifestyle and most religions are in direct conflict. One club promoter in DC gave up the life for religion and is having a difficult time coping with the decision and being faithful to his belief. On a practical level I would recommend that you accept yourself for who you are and realize that God loves you, no matter what and that you are his child. Focus more on your spirituality and personal relationship with God and not some organized religious belief. He is a loving and forgiving God and knows you and your thoughts. You can run but you cannot hide from yourself. You need to make a decision real soon because it is not just about you and your God anymore you have another loving human being caught up in this mess. What is he supposed to do when you decide to do what is best for you. If you must, try to make one person miserable, not two. If you love your boyfriend and don't want to lose him then it seems, that what you need to do is work things out with your God. He made you and will work with you on this issue. I am no authority on the God subject except that I fear him. Your relationship with him is something only you can decide. Best wishes, good luck and try not to hurt your boyfriend too badly when all is said and done.

Dear Bianca,
My boyfriend of the last two months has decided that we should be just friends. He really means this and I can tell by the way he hugs me when we get together these days. Unlike other people who when they say let's be friends, this one seems to mean it. In the past, lets be friends usually meant, don't ever call me again. This time he is actually making an effort to be platonic friends and it is driving me crazy since I am very much in love with him still. What to do?
Caught up- in New York!

Dear Caught up!
Get a hold of yourself girl and take a firm grip. When people say these things they usually mean it and changing their minds is not usually a part of the plan. If the man says it, that means he has been thinking about it for at least a month. The first time killer dumped my ass he had already been involved with someone else for a whole month. I am not suggesting your man has moved on, only that he means what he says. It is a very difficult situation being friends with a man you are in love with but you only have two options. Accept the friendship and suffer while you get over him or kiss him good bye for a while and stay out of his way while you re-cooperate. I am sure your friends will be more than willing to help you through this time and if they don't, you can have killers place in my bed since he claims it is too hot for us to sleep together. Good luck girl and be good. Love Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I have made a very sticky bed and now I am having difficulty sleeping in it. I slutted around and I had quite a few friends and roommates and other peoples boyfriends. Not only that, but I had boyfriends of friends of mine and their roommates as well. I caused a lot of chaos and confusion in many a households and then I got bit by the true love bug. My problem is that, as in all cities, mine included, gay people all know each other and are separated by less than six degrees. Now my past is back to haunt me. I find myself having to explain to my new love how and in what way I was involved with these people. I cannot tell him the truth for fear he will leave me. What am I supposed to do?
Haunted by my past- Mississippi.

Dear Mississippi,
If you were a true pro you would never have to be explaining anything to your new boyfriend. Here is my advice. All that happened before he came along is your business and all that has happened since, is yours and his jointly. Because people are nosy and faggits are fierce and will be telling him all they know, I would suggest that you purge on you own. Make him a great dinner, buy him something diamond, then very nonchalantly tell him who you slept with and how horrible they all were. Tell him how he has tamed you and how sorry you feel for having wasted so much time on those good-for-nothings. With a full stomach and a diamond he will be too relaxed to argue. As my grandmother used to say, "hunger fuels anger." Come clean, this way he will be able to tell the gossip mongers that he is well aware of what you used to do. In order to appear credible though, you will need to stop slutting around in case someone decides to get messy and tell him that you are still living a loose life. Sorry honey, but every hoe has his day and today seems to be yours.
Good Luck, - Bianca.

Dear Bianca,
I recently relocated myself to Houston, Texas, from New York City. Houston isn't exactly the cultural Mecca of the western world, much unlike New York. While I have adjusted to most of the strange southern customs of Texans, I must say that I am homesick for some Boriquen dick. I have found few Latinos to bump wallets with in my new neighborhood, and don't know where to look. Even the Baptist church I attend has no papis to offer, and you know how good and god-fearing some Puerto Ricans can be. So where, in this hell called Houston, can I find myself some uncut Latin trade?
Anita Bicho

Dear Seõrita Bicho
Here's what you have to do: Make your way to your local Catholic Church and before you know it you'll be walking down the aisle with a hot uncut papi chulo. Unfortunately he might be Mexican and not Rican but that's okay; it's just different spices but basically the same flavor, although Ricans are tastier. Here's wishing you much skin.
Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I have face, I have carta! mamma ketch, it is ovah for me.I am a usually sweet person but like Latifah I have had it up to here with these trifling negroes in the DC area. I earn an honest living and I buy my own clothing and pay my bills on time. My problem, however, is that there are some kids who call themselves God-fearing Christians who can't seem to stop speaking evil of me.Their stories are unfounded and straight up lies. For example, the one that says I don't like to work and that a man is supporting me. While I wish I had a man supporting me that is not true yet. The part that bothers me most though, is that they keep telling this man with whom I am having a special relationship that I am not worth shit, and then they tell me he says I am a nymphomaniac with an insatiable desire for sex. They are trying to break us up.These kids won't leave me alone and I am about to strangle the bitch who came on to me, then went and told my boyfriend that I always come on to him. Help me before I end up in prison for one of these trifling hoes. Thanks in advance -
Bothered in DC

Dear Bothered in DC,
Girl, I am sorry to hear about your problem but had this letter not been post marked I would have sworn my editor wrote it. He has a similar problem with the church going queens here in Houston and this is how I told him to deal with it. First give God thanks that they are still talking about you, because this is a clear indication that you are alive and still looking glamorous. They don't talk about ugly or non-threatening people. You are obviously a star if when they get together over a good cup of latte the first thing off their lips is your name. You are fabulous. When you run into these viscous girls in the street be as plastic as saran wrap and act like you love them dearly. This will make them bitter to see you so happy. Have their boyfriends and then send the thank you notes to the girls instead. If that doesn't make you feel better, then throw a party and invite them, dress like the goddess that you are, act like a star, then they will truly talk about you. Take

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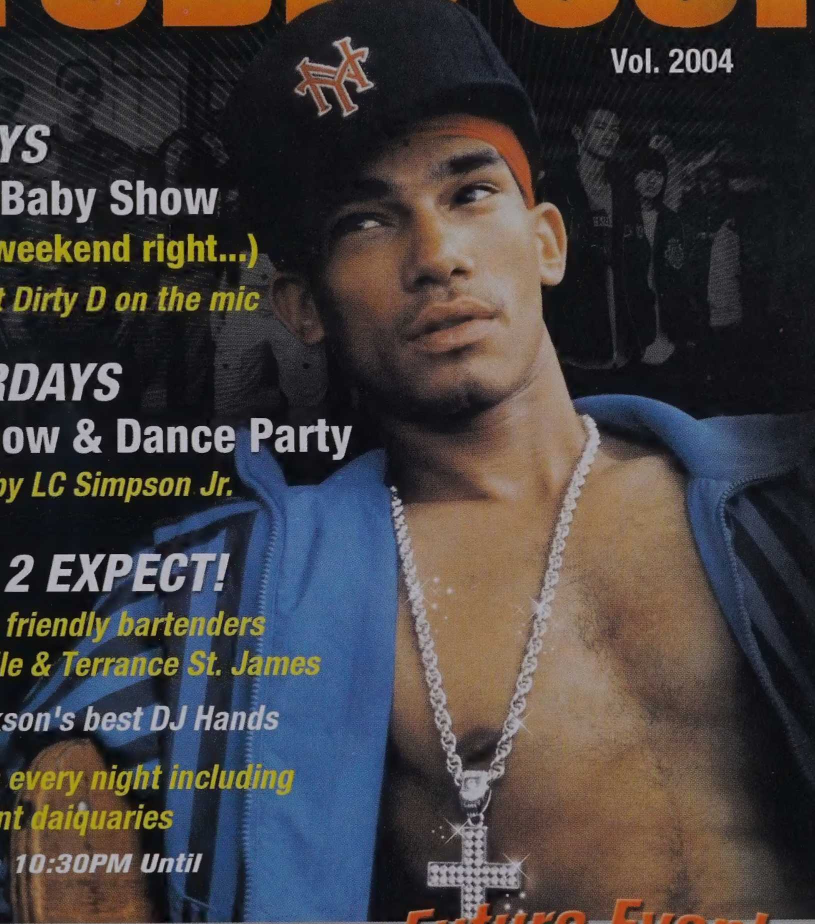
CLUB CITY LIGHTS

STUDIO 601

Vol. 2004



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events

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WEEKEND

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Why Miami? Well, Miami is unlike any other city in the United States. It's a city in the making, unpredictable, ever changing, and simultaneously laid-back. Residents and tourists alike consider Miami a lush, exotic paradise, and a smorgasbord of style, substance, and flare. Furthermore, Miami has proven to be extremely open and accepting of all cultures, ethnicity and sexual orientations.

Come and experience the pulsating nightlife and beaches of Miami from dusk till dawn. Swirling around lakes,waterways, inlets, harbors, marinas and the historic Miami River, Miami is a fragrant spicy bouillabaisse for you to discover and savor. Paddle, sail, visit a museum, shop in style, rent a convertible, drop the top, slip on your sunglasses, be a celebrity and live life Miami-style. Sway to the tropical rhythms and warm ocean breezes that are so much a part of this fabulous city by the sea.

Our friendly residents of South Florida invite you to be a part of SIZZLE 2004, the largest African-American and Latino gay/lesbian event to hit the Southeast Coast.

Portions of the proceeds from this event will be donated to URBAN Soul Squad. URBAN Soul Squad is a non-profit program of The United Foundation for AIDS steadily at work in the fight against HIV and AIDS, a disease that's destroying lives, families and our communities. URBAN Soul Squad provides outreach based initiative geared towards men of color.

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Houston Splash

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DIRECTIONS TO THE OFFICIAL EVENTS

1 CUPIDS MIAMI *(THURSDAY)*
1060 N.E. 79th Street Miami
305.756.2694

From I-95 Southbound
To get to Cupids Miami take I-95 to the 79th st. exit number 7 and head EAST on 79th about 2 miles we are on the right just before the causeway next to the Crab shack.

2 PURE NIGHTCLUB *(FRIDAY ONLY)*
66 SW 6th Street. Miami, Florida .
305.579.0974

From I-95 Southbound
Take the lefthanded exit 2 C for Miami Ave. Stay in the left lane which is the ramp for Miami Ave. Turn right on Miami Ave (you can only go right). Go over the draw bridge, the street curves to the right. Take the first right turn (no street light) between the two white buildings. We are the white building on the right, lots of trees and plants in the front of the building.

From Downtown
Take Miami Ave Southbound and go over the Miami River. The street curves to the right. Take the first right turn (no signal). We are the white building on the right.

3 CLUB BOI *(SATURDAY)*
726 NW 79 th St., Miami, Florida
305.836.8995

From Host Hotel / I-95 Northbound
Merge onto I-95 N. and drive for about 5.7 miles. Take the SR-934/NW 79TH ST exit- exit number 7- toward NW 81ST Turn LEFT onto NW 81ST ST/FL-934 W.Turn RIGHT onto NW 79TH ST/FL-934 E. Club is less that 1/4 mile on the left.

From Ft, Lauderdale/Hollywood / I-95 South Bound
From I-95 Take exit number 7- toward SR-934/NW 81ST ST/NW 79TH ST. Turn RIGHT onto NW 79TH ST/FL-934 E.Club is less that 1/4 mile on the left.

4 BLUE CAFE *(SUNDAY ONLY)*
18290 Collins Avenue (A1A), Sunny Isles

From I-95 North Bound
Take SR-826 Going East towards the beach. Then drive about 5.3 miles. Turn Left on Collins Avenue (FL-A1A). Make a U-Turn at 183rd Street Club will be on the Right.

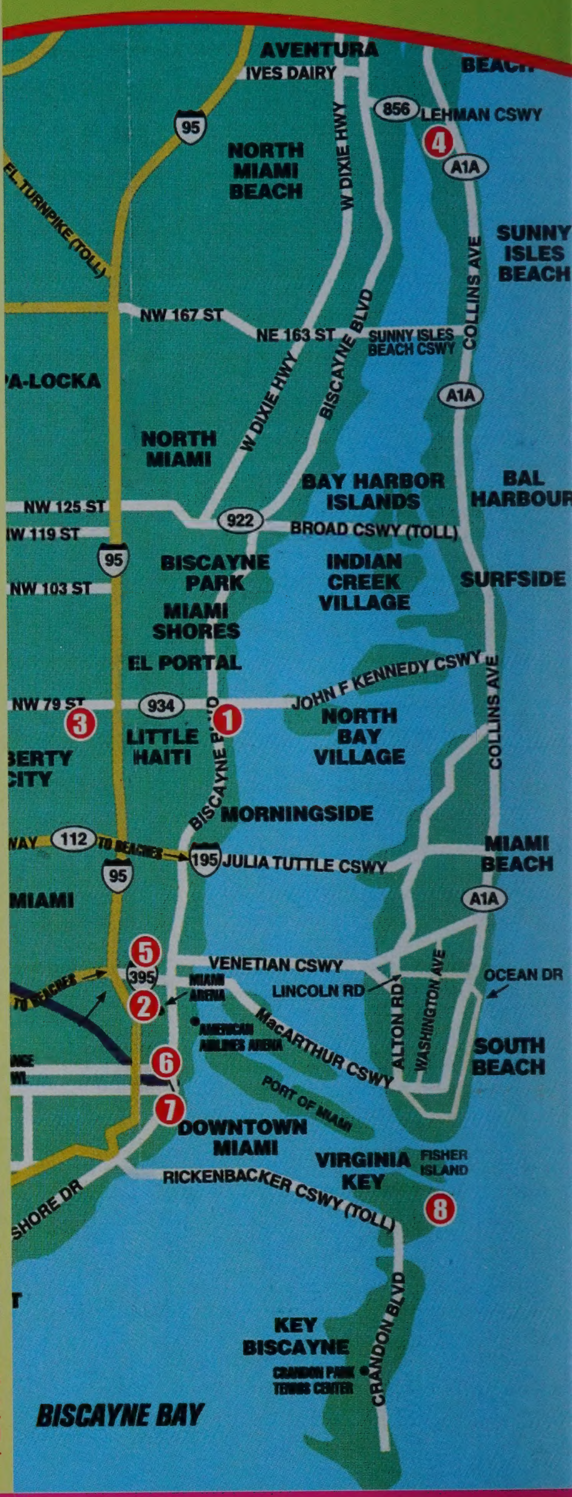
From I-95 South Bound
Take Ives Dairy Biscayne Blvd then make a RIGHT. Pass Aventura Mall and then make a LEFT at Lehman Causeway to Collins Ave (A1A). Make a RIGHT on Collins. Club will be 1/2 Mile on the right

5 I/O NIGHTCLUB *(MONDAY)*
30 NE 14th Street . Downtown Miami, Florida .
305.358-8007

From Host Hotel
Start out going north on BRICKELL AVE/US-1 N Turn LEFT onto NE 14TH ST

From I-95 Southbound
From I-95 S Take the I-395 exit- exit number 5- on the left toward MIAMI BEACH.Take the N.E. 2ND AVE. exit- exit number 2A- toward US-1/BISCAYNE BLVD.Take the NE 2ND AVE ramp. Turn RIGHT onto NE 11TH ST. Turn RIGHT onto NE 1ST AVE. Turn LEFT onto NE 14TH ST.

THE ABOVE ARE THE ONLY OFFICIAL VENUES (DATES) THAT ARE AFFILIATED WITH SIZZLE. WE ARE THE ORIGINATOR OF THESE MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND PARTIES DOWN HERE IN MIAMI — BE AWARE OF THE IMPOSTORS — DON'T END-UP AT THE WRONG FUNCTION!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IVES DAIRY
BEACH
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LEHMAN CSWY
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A1A
NORTH MIAMI BEACH
W DIXIE HWY
FL TURNPIKE (TOLL)
SUNNY ISLES BEACH
COLLINS AVE
NW 167 ST
NE 163 ST
BISCAYNE BLVD
SUNNY ISLES BEACH CSWY
A-LOCKA
A1A
W DIXIE HWY
NORTH MIAMI
BAY HARBOR ISLANDS
BAL HARBOUR
NW 125 ST
922
BROAD CSWY (TOLL)
NW 119 ST
95
BISCAYNE PARK
INDIAN CREEK VILLAGE
SURFSIDE
NW 103 ST
MIAMI SHORES
EL PORTAL
JOHN F KENNEDY CSWY
COLLINS AVE
NW 79 ST
934
3
1
NORTH BAY VILLAGE
LITTLE HAITI
BERTY CITY
BISCAYNE BLVD
MORNINGSIDE
WAY
112
TO BEACHES
195
JULIA TUTTLE CSWY
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MIAMI
A1A
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TO BEACHES
MIAMI ARENA
LINCOLN RD
2
ALTON RD
AMERICAN AIRLINES ARENA
MacARTHUR CSWY
SOUTH BEACH
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7
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SHORE DR
8
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1060 N.E. 79th Street Miami
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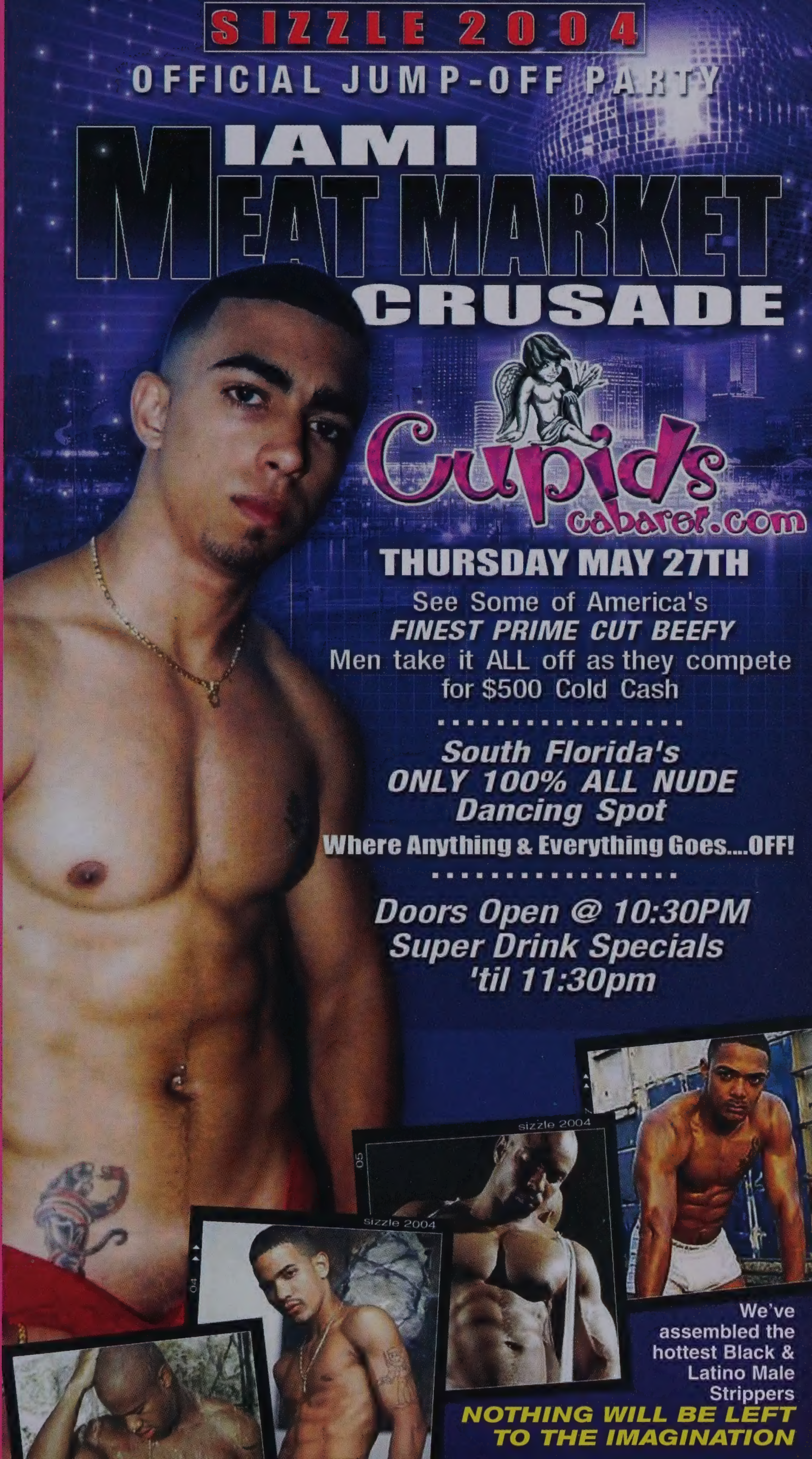

SIZZLE 2004

OFFICIAL JUMP-OFF PARTY

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SIZZLE 2004 Official Jump-off Party

MIAMI MEAT MARKET CRUSADE

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The Party Starts Under A huge Party Tent Outside
and Flows Inside This Awesome Facility.
Yes This Is The Sizzle 2004 Event For The Bois While
The Ladies will be at the Colesium
See some of America's Finest Prime Cut Beefy
Men take it all of as they compete for $500 cold cash.
• South Florida's Only 100% All Male Nude Dancing
Spot... Where Anything & Everything Goes... OFFFF!
Doors Open @ 10:30PM
Super drink specials til 11:30pm

FRIDAYMAY28th
Sizzle 2004 Presents

ONE MIGHTY BOI PARTY

Starring A Parade Of Sizzling GoGo Dancers along with **1500 of the nation's sexiest men.**
@ Miami's newest and sexiest party spot - Pure Nightclub Located at 66 SW 6th Street . Miami,
You'll be stunned by the ambiance, glitz and glitter / **3 Huge Dance Areas:**
Hip-Hop, Reggae on the main floor by DJ Gavin T / House on "The Roof" overlooking the Beautiful
Miami Skyline / Calypso, Meringue & Soca on The "Patio" You aren't ready for this shit?
-18 to party 21 to drink / Doors open @ 10:30pm until 6am

SATURDAYMAY29th (Day Event)
Clikque Magazine Presents

ONE MIGHTY LUAU & POOL PARTY (PART 1)

-**$250 Sizzling Body Contest** / Music, Food, Drinks, Body Contest, Model Search,
Trivia Games, Lots Of Door Prizes, T-shirts, Giveaway and more.
@ Host Hotel Sheraton Biscayne Bay Hotel 495 Brickell Ave.,
(We've secured the entire pool area just for you,
so It's OK to come on OUT!)
Doors Open from 3PM - Until 8PM

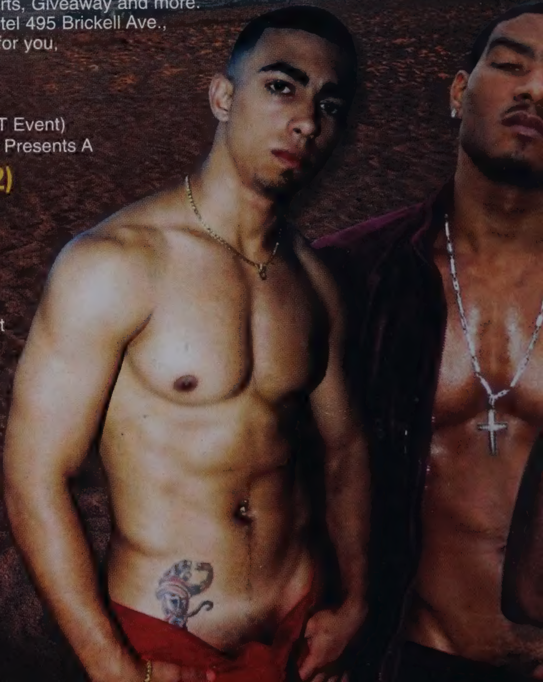
SATURDAYMAY29th (NIGHT Event)
Miami's Hottest Nightspot For The Fellas Presents A

SIZZLING BOI LUAU (PART 2)

@ Club Boi, 728 BW 79th Street
-Expect many prizes and surprises
plus a house load of Sexy Dancers
-2 levels of excitement along with
an extended patio deck
-VIP Open Bar (House Brands)
Come and Jam with South Florida"s Best
DJ GAVIN T and guest DJs

Come experience Sexy Saturdays
@ Club Boi

FREE BUFFET ALL NIGHT
-18 to party 21 to drink
-Doors open @ 10:00pm until



LE2004

EEKEND IN MIAMI
H-31ST
2004.COM

SUNDAYMAY30th
SIZZLE 2004 Presents

BEACH BALL 1

South Florida largest Black & Latino beach party
SUN, SAND & HE - Come join in the celebration
1st Annual $250 Wet Trunk Contest.
Lots of Fun games, Caribbean food, Drinks
FREE FOR ALL
Hosted on dazzling Virginia Key Beach
Virginia Key across the Reckenbacker Causeway
2pm until 8PM

SUNDAYMAY30th
Banjee Magazine Presents

SEX ON THE BEACH (PART 7)

@ The Blue Cafe - 18290 Collins Avenue, Sunny Isles
If you weren't there last year, you had betta ask somebody!
-**Still The Best Party In Miami**... Ever!
-Starring The Sexy Models From Banjee Magazine.
Headlining Mysteek, Unique, Saint, Jay Ryder plus K-Rock, Caramel,Bombay and a host of other dancers **DANCE,SWEAT, FLIRT, SCORE!**
1200 bois + 1 Room = You Do The Math! (Extended lounge areas added for the overflow)
Located in fabulous Sunny Isles across the street from the new Donald Trump Sonesta Hotel, the Blue Cafe is the areas sexiest and hottest nightlife party spot.

MONDAYMAY31st
Sizzle 2004 Presents

MIAMI HEAT DA FINALE

@ I/O Nightclub, Downtown Miami 30 NE 14th Street
Come and Experience the Sizzling sounds of Miami for one last time.
VIBE in this HOT NEW CLUB in Downtown Miami. Tonight it's all about the music.
When the action becomes to much for you to handle, cool down in our super large Garden
@ HOT SEXY ROOMS, SUPER LARGE VIDEO MONITORS

TRAVEL INFORMATION

HOST HOTEL

Sheraton
Biscayne Bay
HOTEL

495 Brickell Ave., Miami FL
RESERVATIONS NUMBER
Code: 4806 / Sizzle 2004
305-373-6000

OVERFLOW HOTEL:
HYATT REGENCY MIAMI
400 SE 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL
RESERVATIONS NUMBER
Code: SIZZLE TEL: 800-633-7313

AIR TRAVEL

DELTA AIRLINES	
Code: 990006-A	800-241-6760
AMERICAN AIRLINES	
Code: 945AB	800-433-1790
CONTINENTAL AIRLINES	
Code: UGERY3	800-468-7022

GROUND TRAVEL

AVIS CAR RENTAL	
Code: J660074	800-331-1600
ALAMO CAR RENTAL	
Code: 303284 GR	800-732-3232
Greyhound	800-231-2222
Amtrak Railways	800-872-7245
Tri Rail	800-874-7245

Public transportation is available. Call 305-263-5400 for more information. Transit maps wil be provided for you at the host hotel.

The hotel doesn't provide an airport shuttle. A one-way fare from the Miami International Airport to hotels is approximately $19-20

If you are staying on South Beach, know that travel time to downtown during the hours between 10PM and 3AM can sometime take 45minutes to an hour during the Memorial Day Holiday. The average time for this commute is normally 5-7 minutes.

ALL EVENTS WILL GO OFF AS PLANNED — RAIN OR SHINE.

The organizers reserve the right to record, both on film and audio tape, people who attend any Sizzle 2004 event. No compensation, financial or otherwise will be offered.

Unless prior written permission is obtained from the organizers of Sizzle 2004, commercial enterprise on or around events is forbidden.

Participation at any Sizzle 2004 event is entirely at the risk of the persons attending.

Persons behaving in an aggressive manner will be immediately ejected without reimbursement.

You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in Sizzle 2004.

Sizzle 2004 is a drug-free, zero tolerance event. No drugs or illegal substance of any kind are allowed, permitted, or tolerated at any of our events.

The organizers of this event reserve the right to refuse admission to any event at any time. The organizers reserve the right to change time, venues, and events of Sizzle 2004 without prior notification.

SIZZLE 2004

YOU'VE GOT OPTIONS

We have 4 different Types of VIP Cards. One's Sure To Accommodate Your Needs

THE ULTIMATE CARD

(Thursday - Monday)
VIP Admission To All 5 Nightclub Parties
For Only $120.00

THE PREMIUM CARD

(Friday - Monday)
VIP Admission To 4 Nightclub Parties
For Only $100.00

THE WEEKEND PLEASER

(Friday - Sunday)
VIP AdmissionTo 3 Nightclub Parties
For Only $80.00

THE GETAWAY CARD

(Fri-Sat or Sat-Sun)
VIP Admission To 2 Nightclub Parties
For Only $60.00

ALL VIP CARD HOLDERS WILL RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING

- FREE Admission To Luau/Pool Party ($15 Value) on Saturday
- FREE Sizzle 2004 T-Shirt
- Complimentary Welcome Packet From The City Of Miami
- VIP/Express Entrance To All Events
- Access To VIP/Express Drink Bar @ Clubs *(No Lines)*
- Access To All Clubs VIP Areas Including VIP Lounge At Hotel
- AND MUCH,MUCH MORE!

To prevent shipping mishaps, we will hold your card for you here in Miami where you can pick it up at the host hotel or at any of our Sizzle events. Sorry, No Checks After May 10th

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED or Make Checks/Money Orders Payable **TO BANJEE BOI INC.** Telephone: 954-987-8637 or 305-528-7495 Website: SIZZLE2004.COM
Mail: Banjee Boi Inc, 931 South Park Road, Suite 105, Hollywood FL 33021

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IS SIZZLE A PRIDE EVENT?

No we are not a pride. We are about throwing the hottest, sexiest parties in the nation.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED / VOLUNTEER.

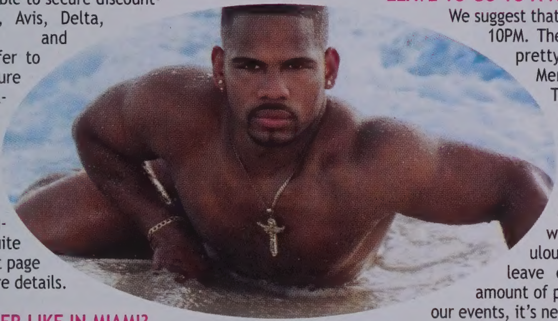
We welcome local support in an attempt to making Sizzle 2004 successful. Be it via promotions, planning and development, or working the events the week of Sizzle, we welcome your assistance. If you would like to get involved, visit the Sizzle website at www.sizzle2004.com or call 954-987-8637

IS SIZZLE WORKING WITH A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION?

Sizzle is working the Urban Soul Squad, a program of the United Foundation for AIDS. Portions of the proceeds from Sizzle will be donated to Urban Soul Squad to aid in their attempts to fight HIV/AIDS, a disease that's destroying lives, families and our communities.

ARE THERE DISCOUNTS FOR AIR AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Last summer we were able to secure discounted rates with Alamo, Avis, Delta, American-Airlines and Continental. Please refer to the back of this brochure for contact and reservations information.



IS THERE A VIP CARD AVAILABLE TO THE EVENTS?

Yes! There are four actually. One is sure to suite your needs. See the last page of this brochure for more details.

WHAT'S THE WEATHER LIKE IN MIAMI?

Sun, sun and yes more sun. Seriously, it does rain in Miami. However, not for a long period of time. The average high is 86 degrees and the low is 71 degrees. For you girls that like to flaunt the furs; not here baby!

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO STAY AT THE HOTEL?

The cost at the host hotel is $89 plus taxes and fees per night. Although the Sheraton Biscayne Bay Hotel is currently sold out, we encourage you to call and check to see if there have been any cancelations or no-shows. Otherwise our overflow hotel, the HYATT has rooms for you at the same rate each night except for Friday. Both properties provide exceptional rooms and services and are conveniently located in Downtown Miami with great access to the beaches, clubs shopping and South Beach. See the back of this brochure for reservations information.

ARE THESE PROPERTIES GAY FRIENDLY?

Both the Sheraton and the HYATT properties are TAG Approved Accommodations. Travel Alternatives Group (TAG) Approved ® accommodations qualify by agreeing to not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in their employment practices, actively outreach to the gay & lesbian community, and strive to create a gay-friendly experience for their guests. Both hotels are aware of the Sizzle 2004 group and are excited to be hosting our event.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO I NEED FOR EVENTS?

It may not be a bad idea to bring your entire bank account. Just kidding, but as with major circuits such as DC Black Pride, At the Beach in LA, Atlanta Black Pride and Black Pride NYC, clubbing can range from $15-25 depending on the venue. Fortunately, we're not charging South Beach prices ($35+), but don't expect Sizzle events to cost less than $15. There is no charge for the Sunday's beach party (Beach Ball 1) or the BBQ on Monday.

DO I NEED TO RENT A CAR?

That actually won't be a bad idea. Although most events are relatively close to the Host hotels, you will still need a car to get around. Miami is a tourist city and cabs can cost a pretty penny.

WHAT'S CAB FARE FROM THE MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO THE SHERATON BISCAYNE BAY HOTEL?

The average cost is between $19-20 for a cab. To save, you can also share a cab with a group of tourist going in the same area. This can run you between $10-12. Transportation information is located at the Airport upon arrival.

IF I AM STAYING ON SOUTH BEACH WHEN SHOULD I LEAVE TO GO TO A NIGHT EVENT?

We suggest that you leave no later than 10PM. The causeway (I-195) gets pretty backed-up during Memorial Day Weekend. Tens of Thousands of Hip-Hoppers make their way to glitzy South beach each night. It's truly a mess. So you can either spend your evening on the causeway or at one of our fabulous Sizzling, events. Just leave early! Because of the amount of people trying to get into our events, it's never to early to get to an event.

ARE THE MALE AND FEMALE EVENTS SEPARATE?

For the exception of the day events (Pool Party, Beach Ball 1 and BBQ), all of the night events from Thursday thru Monday are separate. This brochure only list the male events. Visit our website for a listing of the female events and venues.

WHAT'S THERE TO DO IN THE DAYTIME.

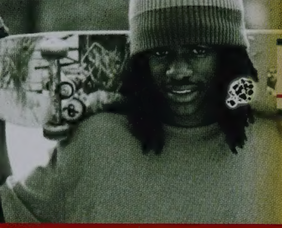
There are literally thousands of things that you can get into in Miami - smorgasbord of entertainment and activities. Our welcome packets at the host hotel will provide you with an array of things to do while here in Miami.

WHERE ARE THERE GOOD PLACES TO SHOP?

Next to sun bathing and beaching, shopping is a favorite for most of our visitors to Miami. Like Lenox in Atlanta, Aventura Mall in Aventura is a perfect place to shop and be scene. For those of you that have a much deeper wallet, Bal Harbour Shops is a must. See shopaventuramall.com and balharbourshops.com for more information and directions or as your hotel information desk.

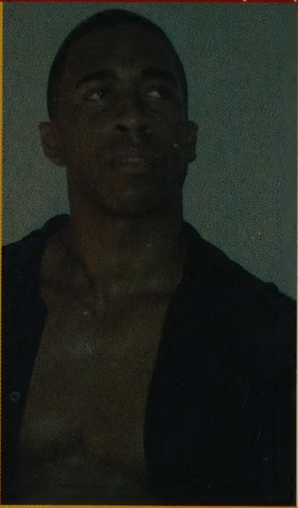
ARE THERE ANY CLOTHING OPTIONAL BEACHES?

I thought that you'd never ask. Yes there is actually. Haulover Beach Park provides sectioned areas were nude bathing and tanning are permitted. Located at 10800 Collins Ave0, Haulover leaves little to the imagination.

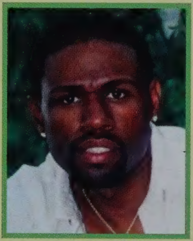


HOUSTON
YOUNG MEN SAVING MEN

YMSM is a community empowerment project of the Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation.



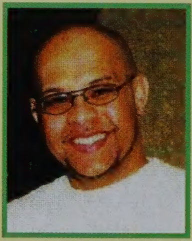
Your Team Of Dedicated Community Workers



The Director of the YMSM program,

DR. GEORGE SMITH

J.D. (2004 Candidate), is a native Houstonian. He received his B. B.A. in Marketing and a Masters of Arts in Sociology from Prairie View A&M University. In addition he received his Ph.D. in Public Administration with an emphasis in Health Service Management from Columbus University. On May 14, 2004 he receives his Juris Doctorate of Law specializing in Health and Entertainment Law from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University. Dr. Smith is responsible for the overall direction of the program, operation systems, policies and procedures, and quality assurance. George's fervor for HIV/STD prevention among Black gay men comes from his belief that more educated top level executives need to extend their knowledge, know-how, and business savvy to community based organizations (CBO) and programs like YMSM, a Project of Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation. Less than two percent of the American population will attain a PH.D and a J.D. He believes that CBO's need well educated individuals to provide leadership and structure to enable the organization to be effective in delivering services to their targeted community. The responsibility of being a father to his six year old son, George II, a mentor to the young men on his staff as well as others in the community and divine intervention is what led George to Donald R. Watkins and the YMSM Project. George jumped at the chance to put the words he preached so often into application. He wants YMSM to be an example for the Black community and the African American men who have sex with men (AAYMSM) community in Houston as well as a model program for other projects similar to YMSM across the country. For the future, George wants to continue to lead the YMSM program proficiently, successfully and with much love. He also wants to donate his time and experience to do pro bono work for persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as continue his career as a health care consultant.



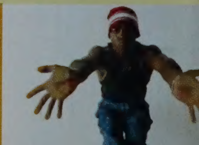
W. JEFFREY CAMPBELL - YMSM Coordinator is gifted with a voice that demands attention, he has lived in Houston for the past 15 years. Jeffrey is a graduate of Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, TX with a B.B.A. in Accounting, and is a certified teacher in the State of Texas. In 2003 Jeffrey, a licensed and ordained minister founded Fresh Start Church. The mission of Fresh Start is to create a safe place for all people to enter into an intimate relationship with God. He is currently working on a Masters of Divinity at Houston Graduate School of Theology. Jeffrey's motivation to work in the field of HIV prevention is generated by his belief that the African American community will continue to loose the battle against HIV/AIDS until the Black church lifts an educated and compassionate voice promoting prevention and healing. As the newest YMSM staff member, going one month strong, he sees the YMSM staff as an effective conglomeration of different personalities and diverse backgrounds that work together for the greater good of the AAYMSM community. The diversity of this staff allows the staff to have its hand on the pulse of the AAYMSM community. According to Jeffrey, "that is what makes a program work!" Jeffrey's job description calls for him to monitor all YMSM activities on a daily basis, represent the program at community events, conduct process evaluations to ensure that the programs goals and objective are being met, etc. Jeffrey realizes that his appointment as the YMSM Project Coordinator is divine

YMSM provides you and your partner with:

- An Opportunity to Voice Your Concerns
- Free HIV/STI Counseling and Testing
- Safer Sex Education
- Peer Counseling
- Risk Reduction Education
- Referral Services
- Depression Counseling
- Self Esteem Development
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness
- Decision Making/Partner Negotiation
- Prevention Case Management
- Leadership Training
- Social and Recreational Activities
- Volunteer Opportunities
- A Safe Social Environmen

YMSM Drop-In Center, 1403 Wheeler, Houston, Texas 77004
(713) 526-1979 office • (713) 526-1976 fax • 1-800-455-YMSM

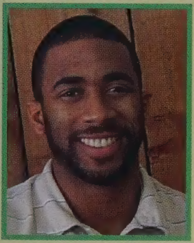
ALL SERVICES ARE CONFIDENTIAL



intervention and creates a greater opportunity for his powerful and charismatic voice to be heard. For Fresh Start Church, Jeffrey believes that a ministry's effectiveness is not measured by the congregation's size; instead it is measured by the ministry's positive impact on the community. For YMSM, Jeffrey wants the program to motivate a change in unsafe and self-destructive behaviors among young Black males struggling with their sexuality and empower these men to live healthier lives, physically, mentally and spiritually.

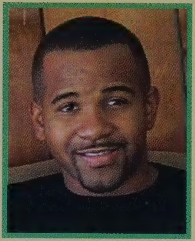
KENTWAN (KEN) HUBERT,

the Community Involvement Coordinator, the one everyone knows, hails from Waco, TX. He moved to Houston in 1996 to attend Texas Southern University. His introduction into this field of work was the effect of feeling suicidal after catching his fist boyfriend and his first love, an older man cheating. A friend referred him to a Health Educator who helped Ken get through his heartache and alleviated his disdain for love and relationships. Soon after, Ken became a Health Educator with a twist: his target audience was AAYMSM. He spoke to young Black guys about coming out, positive life outlooks, being black and gay, and HIV/STD prevention. Ken, a former Page Parks model, has six years of experience in the HIV prevention arena. Renowned for his hilarious personality and long thin frame, Ken embraces the youthful, buoyant, and jovial spirit of YMSM; when he's in the office, the day just seems to fly by. His drive comes from seeing the effect HIV has had on friends and family. Ken loves his job at the YMSM Drop-In Center, which encompasses internet intervention, participation in city and county wide HIV prevention and care planning processes, and facilitating the YMSM monthly Advisory Task Force meetings. Ken's ultimate goal is to one day be the Executive Director of a Black and gay non-profit organization.



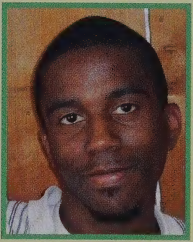
JAMES BROUSSARD,

the Prevention Case Manager, the bright one, is from Lafayette, LA. He received a B.S. in Biology from Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans in 2002. After exchanging medical school for some life and real world experience, he moved to Houston for a fresh start post-college graduation. He was initially hired as the Media Coordinator for the YMSM program. Curiosity, intrigue, and a love for gay men were the main derivatives that led him to YMSM. Everything about YMSM was new to James. He had never seen, spoken to, or touched a person with HIV (or a least a person he knew for a fact was positive). As of February 2004, he has been YMSM's Prevention Case Manager, a position which has James face to face with young black HIV positive males everyday. Everyday, he goes home feeling as though he has really made a difference in the life of a gay Black man; this means a lot to him. His job entails identifying and screening clients, assessing their service needs (e.g. HIV/STD health care needs, adherence to HIV/STD treatment, substance abuse, mental and emotional health, housing/living arrangements, benefits/income, barriers to services, clients strengths, etc), developing a service plan based on clients' needs, provide information, referrals, and assistance with linkages to HIV/STD prevention and medical and psychosocial services. James is currently applying to medical school and hopes to one day be a primary care physician in a position of authority that will allow his love for black men and gay men (especially black gay men) to overflow into the community



DARRELL COLONE,

the Data Collection Specialist, the quiet one, has been in Houston since 1999. He is from Beaumont, TX. Darrell is working on a business degree at Texas Southern University. Darrell came to YMSM through Kentwan, who thought he would like the data collection position. He has always been interested in numbers and percentages; math was his favorite subject as a child. Darrell's introduction to gay society had his head spinning. He was a low key country mouse thrown into a pit of fast talking big city vultures. He found himself lost in the crowd. Ken and YMSM were his saving grace. He had always been interested in HIV prevention and being involved in interventions that empower AAYMSM. Darrell has had both friends and family die from AIDS complications, and he has friends and family currently living with HIV. Darrell's position at the YMSM Drop-In Center entails conducting research activities to identify sources of information for HIV/AIDS and related topics that impact AAYMSM, assist in development and implementation of a needs assessment to identify short and long term HIV/STD prevention needs of AAYMSM. The YMSM program has seriously helped Darrell grow and mature into an intelligent young Black man; he is no longer the frightened, naïve gazelle trapped in a cave surrounded by a pack of back stabbing hyenas. Hands-on experience is what Darrell attributes to his current knowledge and understanding of this field of work.



QUINCY SOILEAU,

the Community Outreach/Communications Specialist, the one who goes above and beyond the call of duty, is a native Houstonian and has three years of experience in the AAYMSM HIV/STD prevention field at the age of 23. He actually grew up in the Third Ward area where the YMSM Drop-In Center is presently located. He moved to Dallas in 2002 for a change of pace and a fresh start in a new city. An outreach worker passing out condoms at a club sparked his interest in HIV prevention, and after volunteering for a few weeks, he became a Community Outreach/Health Educator for Renaissance III (a program in Dallas similar to YMSM). Quincy met Ken, YMSM's social butterfly, at a conference in Cleveland and found out about the program for AAYMSM in his hometown. He moved back to Houston for school and began volunteering at YMSM. Quincy's motivation comes from seeing the positive effects his work has had on people. He is a natural giver and attains an uplifting sense of gratification and peace of mind from helping others. Growing up with a tracheotomy, Quincy endured and survived the harsh and cruel teasing and ridicule that children dish out; YMSM has made him an even stronger person because he realizes that whatever he goes through, there is someone out there whose problems make his look like a warm apple pie. Quincy's responsibilities include coordinating community outreach at various locations where AAYMSM hang out, to advocate on behalf of AAYMSM to decrease service gaps, to implement social marketing activities that YMSM put into practice in the community, etc. A big kid at heart, Quincy doesn't know what the future has in store for him; he does however know that he plans on working as hard as possible to make YMSM a force to be reckoned with in Houston.

It's CUMING
BE A PART
OF IT.
TRAXX IS AN ESTA
ACE
306 LUCKIE ST. • 404.681.4

MAY MADNESS @

TRAXX

SHMENT FOR THE CHIC, THE GROWN AND THE SEXY

TRAXX WUZ HERE!

Sat., May 8th

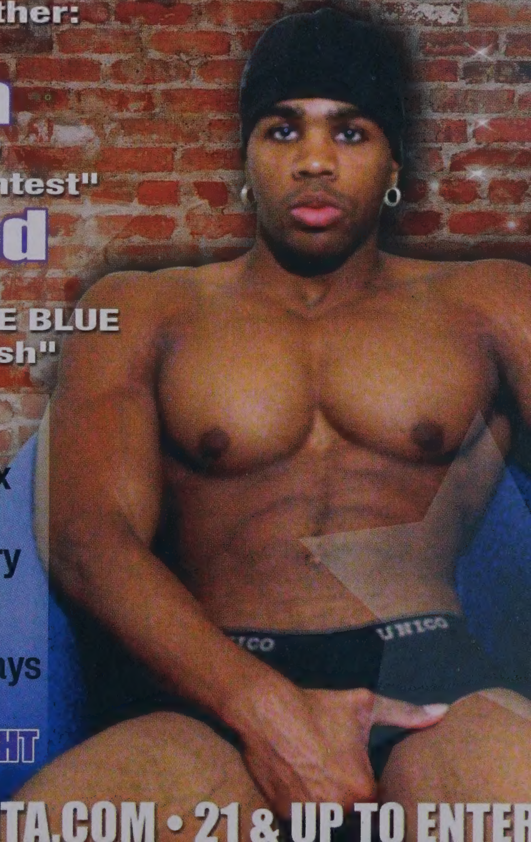
raxx presents: "MOMMY DEAREST"
Music by: the District Mother:
DJ Sederick

Sat., May 15th

TRAXX presents: *EXPOSED*
"The Hot Body & Bikini Contest"

Sat., May 22nd

TRAXX presents:
THE RED, THE WHITE, & THE BLUE
"Traxx's Memorial Day Bash"



Regular Weekly Line-Up

SATURDAY: Legendary Traxx
Hip-Hop • House • Reggae • R&B

MONDAY: Stars of the Century
The nation's premier lip sync
entertainment showcase

TUESDAY: Thugged Out Tuesdays
Atlanta's ultimate Hip-Hop party

DOORS OPEN @ 10PM EACH NIGHT

22 • WWW.TRAXXATLANTA.COM • 21 & UP TO ENTER

BIANCA FROM PAGE 26

it from me, it really isn't so bad being talked about; try being ignored where ever you go and see how that feels. love Bianca.

Dear Bianca,
I thought I had gotten over my ex a while back but now I am not sure. I have dated since we broke up but I am still not into a committed relationship. My problem is this. My best friend and I debated the issue of whether or not to read his diary that he had left behind at my house after he decided to leave. It has been a year since he left and I won the debate over the issue of, to read or not to read and so we ended up reading the damn diary. Our findings were mystifying and unbelievable. This man got fucked in parks, under bridges and in train stations all over town. Sometimes he claimed to have lined up a gang to bang his hole. Reading this made me sick to my stomach and all the hatred for him came back. I thought I was over him, so why does it hurt so bad? I have tested negative for HIV since I read the diary but I still feel like kicking his ass. What am I supposed to do?
Hating him terribly in New York

Dear HHTINY,
You are probably over him but the knowledge that he had you and New York together is bound to bother you. Thank God you are still negative and double thank him that this man walked out of your life. Let the sorry moronic, asshole know that had he told you of his escapades to the park at night you would have joined him, and it would have been fun for the both of you. If you are not that kind of girl then act like you never read the diary since you really shouldn't have in the first place. Let bygones be by gones. On the other hand get a bat and I will fly to New York and help you beat that bitch with the bat. Love and Penis! Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I am in love with a crooked dick man who could not care two cahoots about me. He screws me once in a while and is always chasing other asses all over town. What do I do?
In love with the crooked dick.

Miss Gyrll,
I understand your obsession with the crooked dick. Killer has a nice crooked one that does me lovely as well.However you have a problem and you have acknowledged it. There is only one thing left for you to do and that is solve it. Next time the man comes to your house bound and gagg him and never let him leave until you have had enough to last you until he decides to come over again. love Bianca.

Dear Bianca,
I've gotten myself into a big mess and don't know what to do. About a year ago, I asked my bestfriend to hook me up with a friend of someone he was dating. Well, for too many reasons to name here, that didn't happen. Here we are a year later and as fate would have it, me and this person finally hooked up. We seemed to hit it off quite well. It's so strange and yet so perfect, the things we have in common. We spend hours on end on the telephone and have cultivated a great relationship with email. It's only natural that the sex would be intense, passionate, and over all "all that". The problem is that he's involved with someone. In fact they live together. At first, that didn't bother me because I was "beating someone else's time"; I was the "clean up man, just doing my duty". Well, here lately, I'm tired of being number 2 and I'm ready to step up to the plate and claim my riteful throne of #1. I realize I stand the chance of having my position "snatched" away, by the next big butt with a smile, but I'm enjoying the moment. He tells me to be patient, that his relationship is on a rocky course headed to hell, but now I'm having 2nd and third thoughts. Miss Bianca, answer this question without a fierce read, because I don't want to have to read your editor about promising all those boys he's going to put their picture on the cover. Working Hard & Flying Right while going crazy over the boy that DELIVERS TIME

Dear Whatever,
I don't have to read you about being ready for your rightful place in this man's life. You are already there. Second in the eyes of the world but first in his heart. Take it from me. You have it good. Ask the gyrll whose shoes you want to step into, the bullshit she has to put up with on a daily basis. She does the dishes, the laundry, etc and you get the flowers and the big mandingo dick. Shut your mouth and just swallow... your pride that is. Wedding Gowns are over rated and very uncomfortable I might add.Take it form me, I have tried on and modeled many. Before Killer came along I was about to marry every man that crawled into my bed.But he taught me a very valuable lesson. As long as you are not married it is not cheating. I love it ,I love it!!! On, to the issue of my editor. Is it my editor or my publisher who keeps telling boys that they will be on the cover of the next issue? Actually I know it is my editor, but so what? If you co-owned this fierce publication, I am sure you would have to do some twenty covers per month in order no to get beaten by those promises. So don't get your stilettos caught up in your hairnet, over my editors shenanigans, just be content as number 2, isn't that were you always ranked in high school. OOOOps! my bad, at graduation that was 222.
Love Bianca

Dear Bianca,
I have recently found out that my boyfriend of seven years has been having an affair with a friend of ours for the past year and I am going to leave his ass. As soon as I can find a place to live I am out of here. I am sick of his shit and his playing me like this. He pays the bills , does the laundry sometimes, cooks and the sex is good, but why did he have to do this to me. I hate him and I am outa here. That no good son of a bitch is going to miss me and pay dearly for what he has done to me.
No one treats Josephina like shit and gets away with it.

Dear Josephina,
I know that is not your name but that is okay. Sounds to me like you are the one who is going to miss him and I don't see from your letter where he has treated you like shit. Sounds like you have a good man to me and you are the sorry one. The sex is good and he pays your bills, now heifer, what else on earth do you want from this man. Good dick and my bills are payed and me and killer are together forever. If he cheated for a year and you could not tell, act like you still don't know, or go find the man and your friend, Beat them both and then take your man home. If that does not work, ask this wonderful man of yours if he has time for a third girl, I am free on weekends as killer is usually out of town. Sorry to disappoint you! Love Bianca.

Dear Bianca,
I have a terrible obsession with straight men or those whom I cannot tell if they are gay or not. I live in New York and I meet these men on the train, around the corner from my job , by my house and just about anywhere I go. My problem is this. They allow me to spend money on them, we sometimes hug and they act like real gentlemen when we go out, but we never have sex and a relationship, a gay relationship never ensues. What are these men up to and how do I find out if they are gay or get them to come out. Love sick in New York.

Dear Lovesick in NY,
Girl, how are you, I know exactly who you are and your questions baffle me. On one hand, I don't know when straight men started going out to the movies and dinner with men such as yourself, who are obviously gay. And on the other hand how straight are these men if they approach you and it gets to the point where phone numbers are exchanged. I know that the kids in New York will go out with anyone who is paying as whoring in its many forms has become quite common place. My thoughts on the matter is that you are in denial. You don't really want a boyfriend, so you date straight men, because it is safe from commitment and the pressures of sex. I could be wrong but girl, go find you a gay boy and get some dick, sounds like you need it real bad. Love Bianca

Bianca

Bianca is interested in helping
you solve some of the greater
mysteries of life. Write her at
Clikque Magazine,
931 South Park Road, Suite 105,
Hollywood FL 33021
Or email her C/o
Clikque1@aol.com

CLIKASCOPE

GETTING YOUR MONTH OFF TO A GREAT START

ARIES

Aries- Miss Things, your ship has docked so go unload the goodies. There is so much to chose from so only take the top shelf. Let the other not so worthy ones, stay on the boat. You are pretty and sophisticated and there is a date chasing after you, only you are not taking notice. Slow down and let him ketch up.

TAURUS

Taurus- The bull in you wants to show his prowess and there is no better time. You are the only stud and can live up to anyones expectations. Go out there and let the kids know that you are here to separate the have's from the have nots. This is your time to steal the show for good.

GEMINI

Gemini- This is one ovuh month for you, as you celebrate your birthday. All your dreams will come through this month, if you want them hard enough. Just remember to be yourself and no one else. Life will be much simpler than way. Love is on the way.

CANCER

Cancer- You are so at peace with yourself that there is no stopping you. You will shine and excel at all the things you put your mind to. This is your drama and remember that most of the people in it, are not even supporting actors but extras. Treat them as such. That ex flame of yours is hot on your trail. Everyone finds you irresistible so please don't settle.

LEO

Leo- The world is yours, sugar. You are sweet but firm and this trait of yours is about to pay off big time. The lover in you is about to pull all stops and that man or woman will be eating out of your palms this month.

VIRGO

Virgo- So you took the big plunge and woke up in yet another relationship. Be careful and pace yourself. You may have a good thing going but only time will tell. Have fun while you can. Sometimes all that glitters is gold. Stay focussed.

LIBRA

Libra- This is your month and let no one tell you otherwise. In this version of the play you are the lead and sole actress. Do not let anyone steal your starring role nor your joy. It was meant for you, so take it and have a blast. Lovers are all wanting a piece of your success be careful with whom you share it.

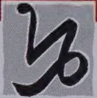
SCORPIO

Scorpio- Stop wanting every man or piece of ass that passes by you. Take care of your business at home because you are on the man hunt and so is he. One day you two will meet in the park behind a bush, and there may be a cat fight. So, slow down and stick with the one you really want to be with.

SAGITTARIUS

Sagittarius- Lovely ones, you are about to explode and there is nothing in this world that can change that. You have done your homework, paid your dues and success is all yours for the taking. Just don't let some silly ass queen or dyke stop you from achieving those goals and things you have been working so hard on all this time. Be happy!

CAPRICORN



Capricorn- My precious ones. You tell a small lie and it has big consequences. People will brand you a liar if they catch you just once. The truth will set you free and besides, it is your life to do as you please, no matter what that other girl thinks. If you did it, admit it and they will just have to get over it. You are the best and they will still come chasing after you, after all is said and done.

AQUARIUS

Aquarius- Despite minor set backs your relationship is still in tact. Your creative abilities on and off the stage are being recognized. You are a star and despite the fact that you like to keep low keyed you still crave that spotlight. You are all that and then some and soon the world will know.

PISCES

Pisces- Dahling, you are a man/woman magnet. Everyone wants a piece of you but it is up to you who will get it. Be discriminate as all are not worthy. Have you noticed how lately everyone, even those who used to not see you are now trying to sleep with you. This month is yours, so have all you want but remember to play safe and skip the rif raf.

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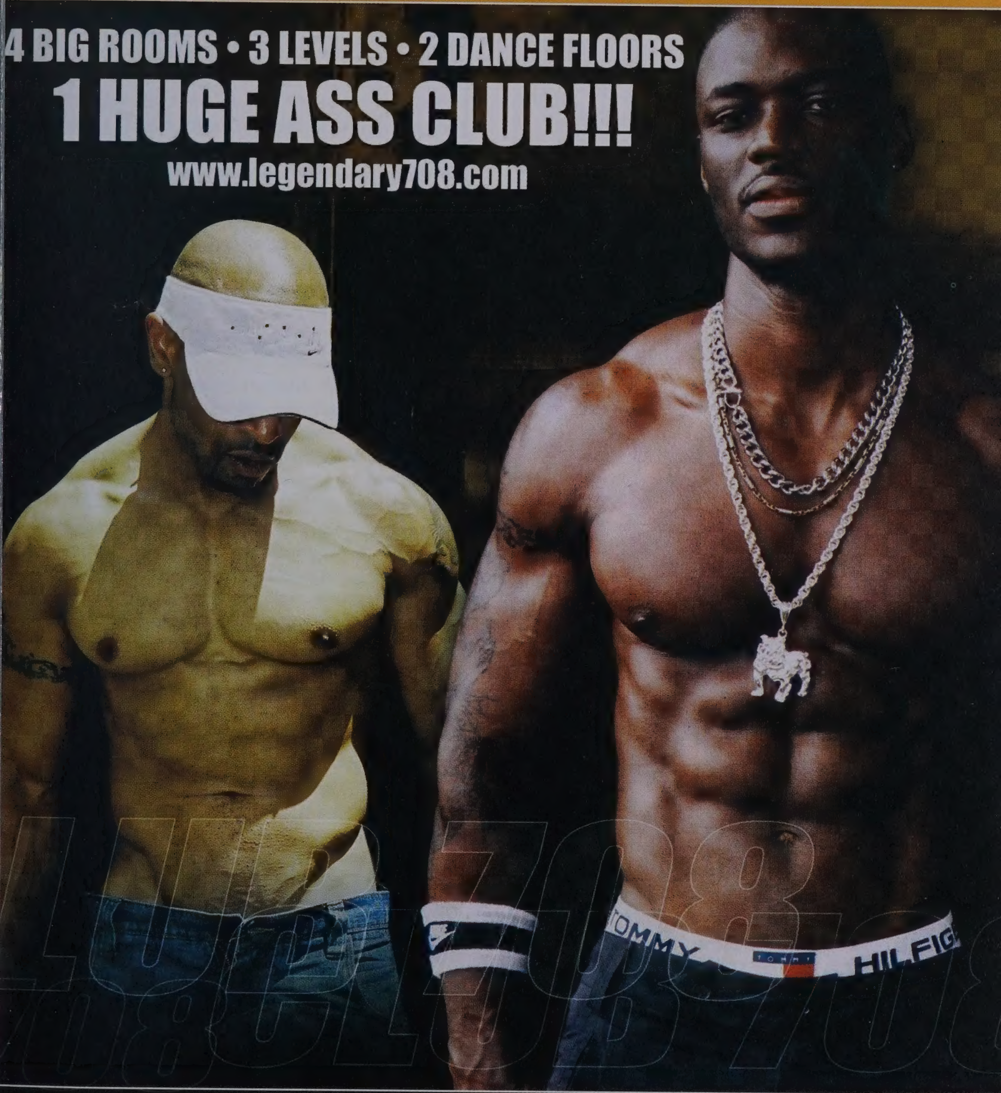
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By CRAIG WASHINGTON

The Religious Wrong

"People want truth or nothing at all. People want sincerity, security and nothing false!" from "What Can I Do For You" as performed by Labelle

When I look back over my childhood, I can truly say that religion was not an integral part of my family "culture." It really was not our way of doing things. In fact, I never attended a regular service until I was 17 years old. I remember neighbors would tease us on those rare occasions when we headed for hallowed ground. "Must be a wedding or a funeral! "Lord, the Washingtons are going to church. I know it's gonna rain!" My parents often laughed right back at them. They freely admitted to the absence of that tradition in our home as they were not ashamed about their non-conformist stance.

As a young man, I came to understand that my identity as a same-gender-loving being, that is a non-heterosexual, had placed me as an outsider at the gates of any black church in America. I realized that this identity and the resulting social location necessitated that I take some stance either in opposition or deference to the cultural status quo. It is the wretched choice of the oppressed either to deny your essence in order to be accepted for what you are not, which is to die; or to accept the godforsaken lot they have offered your kind, which is to live a non-life, or to redefine yourself demanding recognition from those who have not a name for what you are, which is to live fully in the bulls eye of fear and ignorance. Perhaps my parent's non-compliance afforded me a critical eye, the wherewithal to interrogate any who dared question my right to be. This vision enabled me to distinguish open spirituality and full inclusion from elitist religiosity and rigid hierarchy. I often wonder if my parents had any inkling that they were raising not only a black homosexual (of this I'm sure there was ample evidence) but also a homosexual activist, that is, one who replies "who are you to ask why am I?"

But before long, you may find me in front of the MARTA 5-points station, clanging a cowbell to herald the apocalypse. I guess I am just a middle-aged black gay man on the verge. A president my country did not elect has wasted millions of dollars and hundreds of young lives for an unjustified war and still stands a good chance of being legitimately elected for the first time. He has improved his odds by outdoing his father in playing a nation's bigotry, switching mugshots of big black boogey-

Mr. Washington was lovingly raised by Anna and Leon Washington in Queens, New York and has lived in Atlanta for 11 years. His writings have been published in Clikque, Venus, Arise, Washington Blade, Southern Voice, Atlanta Voice, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, He currently serves as the Volunteer and Training Coordinator for Positive Impact, which provides mental health services for people affected by HIV. He can be reached at cwash360@cs.com.

man like Willie Horton with wedding portraits of battymen and dykes with U-Hauls dragging soda cans. His Georgia cohorts have dutifully followed orders in working the same ruse throughout this ex-Confederate state. Want to wag the dog by keeping questioning citizens of all races off the unmistakable scent of your mendacity? Create a diversionary threat to that which they hold dearest: exclusive privilege. Want to pass budget cuts that rescind healthcare for thousands of women and children in Georgia while no one's looking? Follow the leader. And while you're at it, you can coax black church leadership to hold hands with racist white conservatives at the common grounds of their gay burning bonfire.

Ironies within ironies replicate as majority groups clutch their day pearls at the thought of minorities gaining access to the freedom and power they once had to themselves. The shrill cacophony of homophobic black people and the religious wrong has blended into a harmonious chorus of arrogant indignation. Many heterosexual blacks gag at comparisons between homophobia and racism, and those between civil rights and gay rights as if blacks were the America's only oppressed group who in turn created the only legitimate civil rights movement. Meanwhile the religious right defines the separation of church and state as erasing God from our lives, their God that is, whom they assert is the only God. Trust and believe that these saints are not fighting to have Jewish, Buddhist, or Muslim edicts etched across the walls of government buildings. They are striving for a Christian theocracy in which they can legally subjugate hell bound sinners using the same scripturalism that supported slavery and outlawed interracial marriage.

As "The Passion of the Christ" raises accusations about who killed the incarnate deity, it is the Christian zealots who are obliterating his spirit, by rebuking his principles of agape love which, by the way, doesn't mean love only those who look, prey and screw exactly like you. With all respect to gay and

CONTINUES ON PAGE 46

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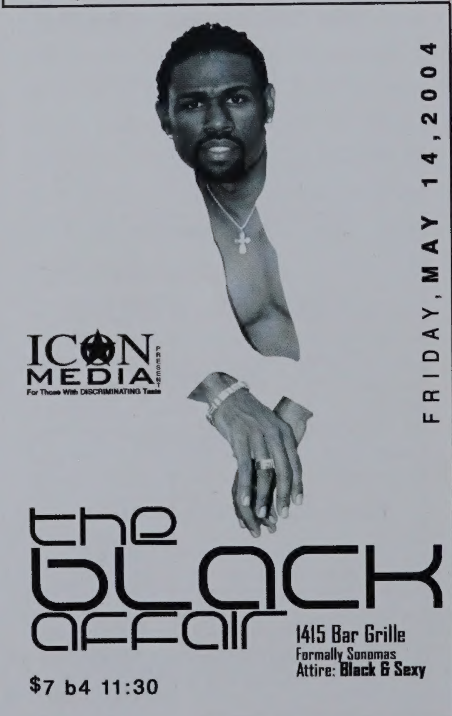
By CRAIG WASHINGTON

METH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

other Christian reformists, I sometimes wonder why they petition the very pastors and popes who have maligned Christianity, those who then blame the damage on the people they ostracize. If the majority of churches have become social clubs that are more passionate about rooting out sin then building an inclusive gospel, then why not let them be that? We who wish to really learn how to emulate Christ (or any other spiritual teacher who showed people how to love) would do better to create our own churches, temples, schools or covens.

Yesterday's civil rights movement drew heavily from a deep well of black theology inspired by the souls of black folk. We knew all too well the dehumanizing effects of discrimination. We knew that despite the overwhelming odds, we were right and God was on our side. And the church provided a home base for that movement. But our challenges have changed dramatically over the past forty years. The class divide between privileged and poor blacks has entangled our communities in the cross wires of complacency and nihilism. As the visionary bell hooks so eloquently signifies, "Many of the material gains generated by militant anti-racist struggle have had little positive impact...for the revolution from within that is the foundation on which we build self-love and love of others has not taken place." We now struggle in absence of a galvanizing love-based movement capable of addressing our needs as blacks in America. Racism is not our only threat yet seems to be the one reliable stimulus to which blacks respond. There are roaring black silences in the face of domestic violence and rape of black women, the erasure of the poor and homeless, the enslavement of black men in the prison-industrial complex and the scorn heaped upon black lgbt people.

When will we raise our standards about the places where we worship and learn, to build this love movement of which hooks speak? Would a rabble rouser like Christ, or any other activist educator support the plethora of black churches that invest in separating so many from the fold? Then why do we? Politicians and media continue to revere the church as the primary site of sociopolitical power in Black America. I believe the church relinquished that role decades ago. Like the Democratic Party they blindly support, far too many black church leaders pander to the lowest common denominator rather than risk taking a stand that may be opposed by the majority in the polls or the pulpits. When we stop begging for acceptance from demagogues who quote scripture out of the context of principle then we change the conversation and unleash our power. As Baldwin prophesied, "Your crown is already bought and paid for. All you must do is put it on your head." There are progressive pastors, Yoruba priests, and leaders of other faiths among us who have transformative messages we need to hear. We who are black and transgendered and bisexual and gay and lesbian have infinite lessons to teach our people and the rest of the world. Let us utilize the power of our own stories of anguish and triumph. Let us settle for nothing less than what we deserve. Truth.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	12 noon-2:00 pm **Hieroglyphics Literary Café**
	6:30-10:00 pm **Akhet Welcome Reception**
Saturday:	7:00 am-dusk **Pantheon at the Water's Edge: The Beach Party!**
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Sunday:	1:00 pm-8:00 pm **Sed Festival Pool Party**

beginnings: In the summer of 1988, a group of friends decided to come together to organize and enjoy a day "at the beach" on the 4th of July. Each year, this event has grown in participants and in scope. It has become the nation's largest recognized gay pride celebration for persons of color. The Beach Party, with its attendance of approximately 10,000 persons from all over the country, is now the centerpiece for a series of events known as Los Angeles Black Pride.

Produced by the At The Beach Shorey Inc., Los Angeles Black Pride. 4745 West Slauson Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90056, 323/293-4ATB, info@atbla.com or atbla@aol.com.

John Deshler Photography

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ARTICLE BY SCOTT BOGAN

THINKING

Recently, I received a call from a close friend of mine who wanted to inform me about two guys that we know who were in a car accident. Apparently the two were in Atlanta celebrating one of the guy's birthday. They both had been drinking and while driving home on Interstate 285 the driver ran into the back of a semi. The driver came out with a few scratches and bruises. The birthday passenger wasn't as lucky and currently remains in the hospital with brain damage. Since I received that call, all kinds of thoughts have occurred to me. I've been thinking about how precious time is and about how the decisions that we make can have life long consequences. I've been thinking about the importance of living in the moment. Lastly, I have been thinking about judgment and how it is just wasted energy.

I would be willing to bet that the majority of us have left clubs or parties having a few drinks and have made the conscious decision to drive ourselves and our friends home. I know that I have and if it were not for the grace of God I would not be typing this article. I know in my younger days I drove around Atlanta many weekend nights plastered. Even more recently, I have had more than a few drinks and drove myself home. These decisions could have had a horrible consequence for myself, people that are close to me and/or innocent people that just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I have made poor decisions in other areas of my life. I choose not to finish college. In my junior year, I decided that I hated school. In my naive superiority, I strongly felt that college wasn't a measure of intelligence but a measure of discipline (ironically, I am not that disciplined today either). After receiving a portion of an inheritance, I packed up and moved to NYC. While my lack of pedigree has not kept me from success, it certainly has kept me from realizing my full potential and I often think about where I could be if I had finished my degree. It also has had a lasting affect on my self-esteem. I realize that I am an intelligent articulate man however, often times when I am with my friends who are doctors, lawyers, etc....I honestly must say that I feel "less than". Because of this feeling, even people that know some of the deepest secrets of my heart don't know that I do not have a degree. I am amazed by the validation that you get from a piece of paper. But I made a decision. It was a decision that I can choose to change but until that happens it remains a decision that I must live with for the rest of my life.

There are times in my life where I find myself saying things like, "Why didn't I finish college?" "Why didn't I say I love you?" Or even something as simple as "Why didn't I ask that guy out?" When there is tragedy around you, you cannot help but think about the moments that have passed you by in your lifetime. Maybe that is how the saying "my life flashed before my eyes" came about. You can learn from these moments and hope that the next time you will act or react differently but you will never relive them. They are gone forever. For example, there is a guy that I met through a friend at a party one evening last summer. He and I flirted with each other the entire night. So much so that it was even obvi-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 49

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ous to those around us that we liked each other. The problem was that neither of us wanted to act on our flirtation. The reason that I couldn't act was simply fear. I was and I am afraid of being rejected. My fear of rejection usually leaves me paralyzed and this was the case that evening. Almost a year later, I have only seen this guy once and we did flirt with one another but it just wasn't the same. The moment had passed. In my alone time, I occasionally think about him and what could have been if I lived in the moment and stepped out of my fear.

One of my first thoughts after learning about the accident was "what were they thinking?" I wondered why they got into that car and drove if they were that drunk. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I had no right to judge anyone. More importantly, what would my judging change? The fact of the matter is it was an accident and as I said before I have done the exact same thing. I have just been spared by God's grace and mercy. The problem is that we all allow the judgment of ourselves and others to rule our lives. Judgment keeps a wall around us. In the past, I have written about how people in social settings tend to place my friends and I in boxes and label us without truly knowing who we are....... and how it drives me crazy. I realized that I have done the same exact thing, and I guess because I don't make it generalized (meaning I usually have points that support my judgment) that I have justified my judging. My judging others stops right now. Well, ok I won't do it as much. After all, I'm not perfect.

I have missed out on so many moments in my life either because of my decisions, my fear or my judgment. Sometimes it was all three. My fear caused me to judge and then make a decision. I believe it was Maya Angelou who once said, "You do better when you know better." Now that I know better, I pray that I can do better! Only time will tell.

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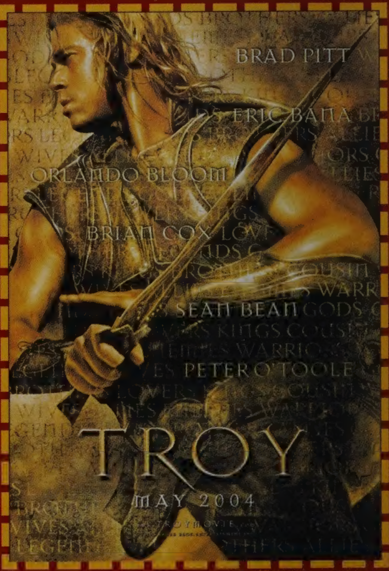
On the Big Screen

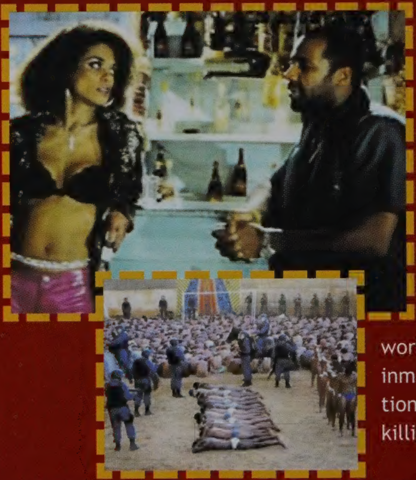
BREAKING ALL THE RULES RELEASE 5/14/04

Quincy (Jamie Foxx) gets dumped by his fiancée,, but he then writes a best-selling book advising guys to avoid heartache by breaking up with their girlfriends before they can get hurt. Quincy's cousin (Morris Chestnut) enlists him to break up with his girlfriend (Gabrielle Union) for him, but while doing so, Quincy falls for her.

TROY RELEASE 5/14/04



Set in ancient Greece, Wolfgang Petersen's Troy is a historical epic based on The Iliad, the Greek poet Homer's account of the Trojan War. Paris (Orlando Bloom), the Prince of Troy, begins an affair with Helen (Diane Kruger), the Queen of Sparta. King Menalaus (Brendan Gleeson) takes this as a terrible insult, both to him and his brother, Agamemnon (Brian Cox), King of the Myceneans. Agamemnon unites the populations of Greece to bring Helen back from Troy. He also wants to expand his empire, and he forms an alliance with Achilles (Brad Pitt), a warrior who hungers for glory and power, to bring down the walled city, which is defended by Prince Hector (Eric Bana).

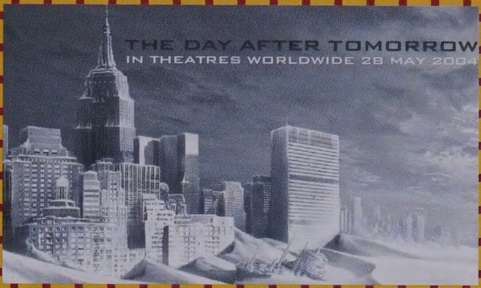


CARABIRU RELEASE 5/14/04

Based on a true story, Caradiru follows a social worker at a Brazilian prison who finds that the inmates are being subjected to horrible living conditions. After a rebellion, police storm the facility, killing 111 people.

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

RELEASE 5/28/04



A high-concept big-budget movie from director Roland Emmerich (Independence Day), Tomorrow is about a climatological disaster that ravages the world beyond recognition. As millions of terrified survivors try to find shelter, Professor Jack Hall (Dennis Quaid), a brilliant paleoclimatologist, heads to New York City — now a frozen wasteland — in search of his son Sam (Jake Gyllenhaal), who may still be alive.

NW
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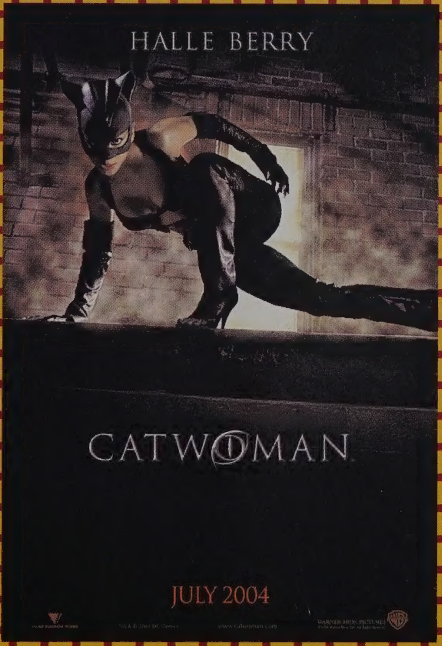
SOUL PLANE

RELEASE 5/28/04

Soul Plane focuses on Dakwan (Kevin Hart), who is awarded a $600 million settlement in a lawsuit from an airline. He takes the money and uses it to found an airline of his own called NWA, with sexy flight attendants, cool music, and an in-flight dance party on each plane. A white family (headed by Tom Arnold) is accidentally booked on an NWA flight.

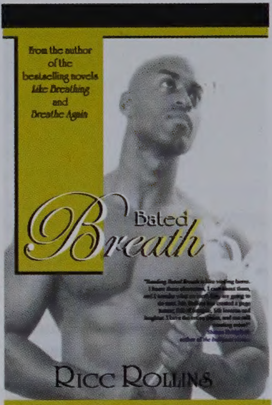


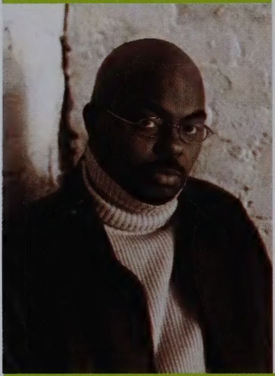
CATWOMAN

COMING IN JULY

Graphic artist Patience Philips (Halle Berry) is murdered by the stooges of Avenal Beauty, the cosmetics company she works for, when she discovers the company's dark secret. An Egyptian mau cat whose life she saved brings her back to life, after which she assumes the identity of the titular feline superhero, seeking vengeance upon the evil head honchos who run Avenal (Sharon Stone, Lambert Wilson).

By RICC ROLLINS


From the author of the bestselling novels *Like Breathing* and *Breathe Again*
Bated Breath
Ricc Rollins



Jordan exited the interstate and made the familiar trek home. As he drove by the florist, he was tempted to stop and pick up a large bouquet, but he wasn't sure that that Zander would accept them. He knew that he was wrong for hanging up on Zander. But he was tired of the secrets. After all, Zander had broken the one promise they made to each other. No secrets, no lies.

"What could be so bad? He knows that he can tell me anything?" Jordan asked out loud.

He reached over for his cell phone, turning it back on to call home.

"Nope, that might make matters worse. I know how I'll make it up to him." Jordan said with a devilish smile as he sped home to make things right between the two of them.

As he drove up driveway, he sat for a moment wondering if life as he had come to know it would be over when he walked through the door. He loved his life and didn’t want anything to change. But it had. Zander had changed. Jordan knew that something was troubling his partner, but he couldn’t put his finger on it. He wanted answers and he wanted them now. But more importantly he wanted things back the way they were.

He thought back to their first date, their first kiss and the first time they made love months after they began their relationship. Both had agreed that they would wait until they were making love instead of having sex.

Jordan had confided in Zander that sex bored him and that he had never made love before, because he had never been in love before. He couldn't believe that he had shared that with Zander their first night together, but talking with 'Z' was like breathing.

He wanted that back. He wanted them to breathe again, to be the couple that shared everything and kept nothing from each other.

The latter thought thrust him back into the present, a place that saddened him the most. He took a deep breath and stepped out of the car.

As he turned the key his heart began beating so loud that he could actually hear it. The alarm chimed as he walked into the door and called out to Zander. No answer. Jordan thought nothing of it as he placed his keys on the small hook that hung from the antique pine hall shelf that he and Zander had bought at an auction in Nashville their first summer together.

As he rubbed the knots that graced the piece, he smiled thinking back to the bidding war that Zander engaged in with the young blonde woman who thought that she and she alone should have the piece. Jordan found himself laughing out loud as he remembered the lady's face when Zander made his final bid.

"Three thousand, four hundred seventeen dollars and fifty cents! Sir are you sure?"

"Yes sir I am, would you like cash, check or American Express Platinum? Name your pleasure." Zander said with a smug look on his face.

"Either would be fine. Going once, going twice, sold to the man with the determined look," the auctioneer said still stunned.

The blond woman rolled her eyes at Zander as she walked away in a huff. Zander just smiled proudly. He was determined to have the piece for

RICC ROLLINS

is an award-winning talk show host, motivational speaker, lecturer, actor and best selling author. A native of Tampa, FL Ricc graduated from C. Leon King High School and matriculated at Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, majoring in business.

By RICC ROLLINS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 52

his home. It spoke to him and that was all it took. And Jordan knew there would be no convincing him otherwise. He could sense Zander's immediate affection for the piece from the moment he laid eyes on it. While he liked the piece, Jordan could take it or leave it, but he knew that for Zander it was more. Later that evening as they returned to the inn, Zander shared that the piece reminder him of his grandmother, Marie Eady, and that he wanted it as a lasting reminder of her.

Jordan's reminiscing was cut short as the phone began ringing. He dashed to answer the phone when he realized that Zander hadn't picked up.

"Hello?"

The person on the other end said nothing.

"Hello?" Is anyone there?"

Again nothing.

"Hello? Is anyone there?”

Not a sound. And then the call disconnected.

"Z, you here? Z!”

No answer.

Jordan made his way up the stairs to see if possibly Zander was up there. As he approached their bedroom he could hear the shower running. He tipped quietly into the bathroom hoping to scare Zander. He smiled at the thought.

As he pulled back the curtain. No Zander.

As he turned to leave he noticed Zander's body slumped on the floor by the sink in the dressing area.

Jordan rushed over to see if he was okay.

"Z, Z Z! can you hear me?” Jordan said gently shaking Zander.

Zander opened his eyes slightly and tried to speak.

"Are you okay?”

Zander tried to speak again, but nothing but tufts of air escaped as he mouthed something to Jordan.

Jordan scrambled for his cell phone while trying to hold on to his partner.

"Hold on baby, help is on the way.”

Zander said nothing as his eyes rolled back into his head and he lost consciousness.

"Hello, 9-1-1, what is your emergency?”

"My partner is unconscious...”

"Okay, where are you sir? Is it an office?”

"An office, no! What are you talking about it's our home!”

"When you said partner, I assumed you were at an office, I....”

"No, he's my life partner!” Jordan said, somewhat agitated at the operator's assumption.

"Is he breathing?”

"Hold on-”

Jordan put the phone down trying to see if Zander was breathing.

"I can't tell,” Jordan frantically told the operator.

"Sir, calm down, sir, I need you to be calm.”

"Okay,” Jordan whispered almost like a frightened little boy.

"Sir? Are you there?”

"Yes, I'm here...”

"Okay sir, I need the address...”

Jordan gave the operator the address and the pass code to the security gate.

"Please hurry...” Jordan begged.

"Sir, stay with me on the phone until the EMS get there.”

"Okay,” Jordan said barely being able to breathe himself.

"Take a deep breath.”

Jordan did as he was instructed, hoping to regain his bearings. It didn't help. He was frightened.

"Sir, are you there?”

"Huh? Yes I'm here...”

"Is the gentleman's condition improving at all or is it the same?”

Jordan leaned down to see if he could determine Zander's vitals. He still couldn't tell if Zander was breathing and he couldn't find a pulse.

"Sir?”

"I can't tell! I can't tell...”

"Sir! Sir! Sir, you must calm down!” The operator said sternly.

"Okay,” Jordan said taking another deep breath, "I'm okay. What should I do?”

"Where are you?”

"In the dressing area.”

"Perfect, is there a hand mirror close by?”

"Yes. There's one on the sink...”

"Okay, I need you to gently lay your partner down on the ground. Carefully, I can't stress enough that you must be as gentle as you can.”

Jordan did as instructed, laying Zander's head down. He quickly moved to the sink, retrieving the hand mirror.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 54

OTHER TITLES FROM
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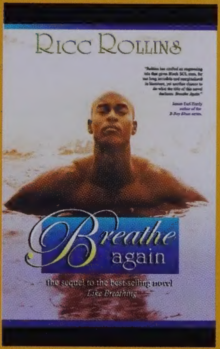

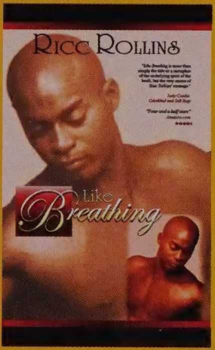

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

"Okay, I have it," Jordan told the operator.

"Great! Now put it at your partner's nostrils and see if it any kind of condensation settles on the mirror. If it does, he's breathing."

Jordan placed the mirror at Zander's nostrils. A slight film fogged a corner of the mirror.

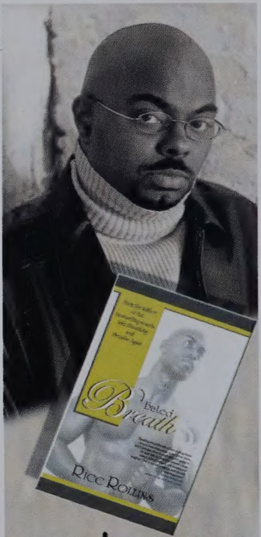
"Yes!" Jordan exclaimed, hope brimming from his voice.

"Good, that's a good sign. Is it a lot or a little?"

"A little."

"Okay, continue to check periodically and EMS should be there any moment now."

Jordan continued to check for signs of Zander's breathing and report back to the operator.



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"Where are they? I thought you said they should be here by now."

"Sir, there is an accident on the interstate and traffic is backed up for about a mile."

"What?!?!?"

"Sir, calm down. The paramedics say there only a minutes away from the off ramp and they should be to you shortly."

"Shortly? Define shortly?"

"Sir, I'm sure that they're doing everything in their power to exit the ramp. People aren't responding to the sirens so they're having a difficult time getting to the exit. How is your partner's breathing now?"

"It's still the same."

"Well that's a good sign, at least there is no noticeable change."

With that said, Jordan heard a knock on the door.

"Come in," Jordan yelled.

"That's the EMS team, sir. You're in capable hands now. I sincerely hope that your friend will be alright."

"Thank you, sir. By the way, what is your name? "

"Anderson, Joshua Anderson."

" Thank you for everything. I could not have done this without you"

"You're welcome boy, I mean son."

"Huh?"

"I said you're welcome sir."

"Oh..."

"Is everything alright?"

"I guess, I have to go now."

Jordan disconnected the call as the workers examined Zander.

"Sir can you tell me what happened?"

"I came in and found him in the dressing room. The next thing I knew, he passed out."

"Hey Craig look at this..."

"Well I'll be, what the..."

"What? What is it?" Jordan asked trying to see what the paramedic was referring to.

"Sir could you step out of the room please, but don't go to far. I may have some more questions for you."

"I want to stay right here..."

"Sir, please do as you're told."

"This is our house and I am not moving."

"Sir, I am going to ask you once again to please leave the room. We've got everything under control. You're only getting in the way."

Jordan couldn't argue. He stepped into the hallway.

"Craig, do you see this? What in the hell happened here?"

"Looks like there was a struggle?"

"You think the guy in the hall had anything to do with it?"

"I don't know. You think?"

"He looks so familiar to me."

"Yeah he does."

"I know that I've seen him somewhere before."

"Don't you hate when that happens."

Jordan continued to pace waiting on someone to tell him something. He took another deep breath hoping to soothe his frazzled nerves. As he exhaled his cell phone rang.

"Jordan Jacobs, may I help you?"

"Jordan, you okay?"

"Hello Mama. How are you? No I'm not okay. Zander has passed out and I don't know what's wrong with him."

"What! What happened?" Mamie asked.

Jordan relayed the incident to Mamie while continuing to pace.

"That's where I know him from! He's that dude from the TV!"

"Nah, he just looks like him. You know they all look alike..."

"You got a point there, but I just heard him say his name. Jordan Jacobs."

"Wonder what he's doing here."

"He told you he lived here."

"He did say something about this being their house..."

"Who do you think this guy is to him?"

"I don't know, but from the looks of it he cares a lot about him."

"Maybe it was a lover's quar-

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rel," Craig said feigning a limp wrist.

"You think they're queer? "the other paramedic whispered.

"I don't know but you need to make sure that you have your gloves on just in case."

"Yep, got em' on. I guess we should cover this guy up. Wonder why he was naked?"

"Your guess is as good as mine. Go ask that Jacobs fellow for a robe or something. This guys business is all exposed."

"Yep, kinda makes you wish you were a black man don't it. Look at the size of it."

"I'm beginning to think I'm the only "normal" one in the house."

"Just an observation, I mean how could you miss it."

"Go get something to put on this guy, you freak."

"I got your freak, buddy!" Sam said grabbing his crotch.

Craig didn't reply he just shook his head at his partner and returned to attending to Zander.

"Excuse me sir, but we need some clothing for your friend."

"Hold on, Ma! Better yet, I'll call you back."

"Okay baby, keep me posted, I'll say a prayer for you both."

"Do that Ma, do that. Love you Mama!"

"Me too baby, you and Zander."

Jordan disconnected the call as he made his way to the dressing room to find something to put on Zander.

"Here you go." Jordan said as he handed the EMS worker a pair of gray sweats and a Zander's fraternity t-shirt.

"Thanks. Here you go, Craig. Sir, do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions?"

"I'll be glad to answer any questions you have. But can't we answer them on the way to the hospital?"

"Your friend is in bad shape. Can you tell me again how this happened?"

"As I told you, I came in and found him in the dressing room barely breathing. The next thing I knew he had passed out."

"Oh I see."

"You see what?"

"Rhetorical comment, that means..."

"I know what it means."

"What was I thinking, you being on television and all..."

Jordan said nothing. He could feel the blood rushing from his face.

"Sir, you alright?"

"I'm fine. Shouldn't we be on our way to the hospital?"

"We'll be leaving shortly, just waiting on the Sheriff."

"The Sheriff?

"Well, it looks like there was some kind of scuffle here and judging by your friend's condition, this could very well be a homicide before it's over."

Hearing those words caused Jordan's stomach to turn.

"You can't possibly think that I had anything to do with this. Do you?"

The technician said nothing, but it was written over his face. He did.

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THE SUPERS MODEL OF THE WORLD
PLANE CRASH

Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schiffer, and Rachel Hunter are flying to a super models conference in Paris, when suddenly the Captain of the plane announces: "We have just lost all power to the engines of the plane and are going to make an emergency crash landing - please assume the brace position immediately!" Immediately the three models look at each other and start preparing for the worst. Claudia quickly pulls out some lipstick and make-up and starts fixing her face up. Bewildered, Naomi and Rachel ask: "What in the hell are you doing Claudia fixing up your make-up-we are about to fricking crash!" Claudia responds: "Well I know for a fact that the rescue workers will search for, and save first, the people who have the best looking faces-this is why I am putting on my make-up." Immediately Rachel Hunter rips open her blouse to expose two beautiful mounds of flesh which inexplicably defy the law of gravity. Totally confused, Naomi and Claudia shout: "Rachel have you lost your fucking senses?? Why are you baring your breasts for everyone to see-we are about to die!" Rachel responds: "I have it on good authority that in plane crashes, the rescue workers look to save first the women with big beautiful breasts-this is why I am exposing my tits!" Not hesitating for a moment, Naomi Campbell pulls down her skirt and Panties to expose her female "love triangle." Freaking out, Claudia and Rachel Yell: "Naomi - Are your fucking crazy?? Why are you exposing your pussy for everyone to see??" Calmly, Naomi responds: "BITCH PLEASE! I know for a fact that the first thing the rescue workers always look for in plane crashes is the black box!!"

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By Michael A. Handy
Aurora, IL

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I am the all grown up Brandy,
And the sexy Beyonce.

I am the royalness of Queen Latifah,
With the energy of Nas.

I am the rock and roll of Tina Turner,
And the flow of Mary J. Blige.

I am the loving Yolanda Adams,
With a pinch of Gloria Gainer.

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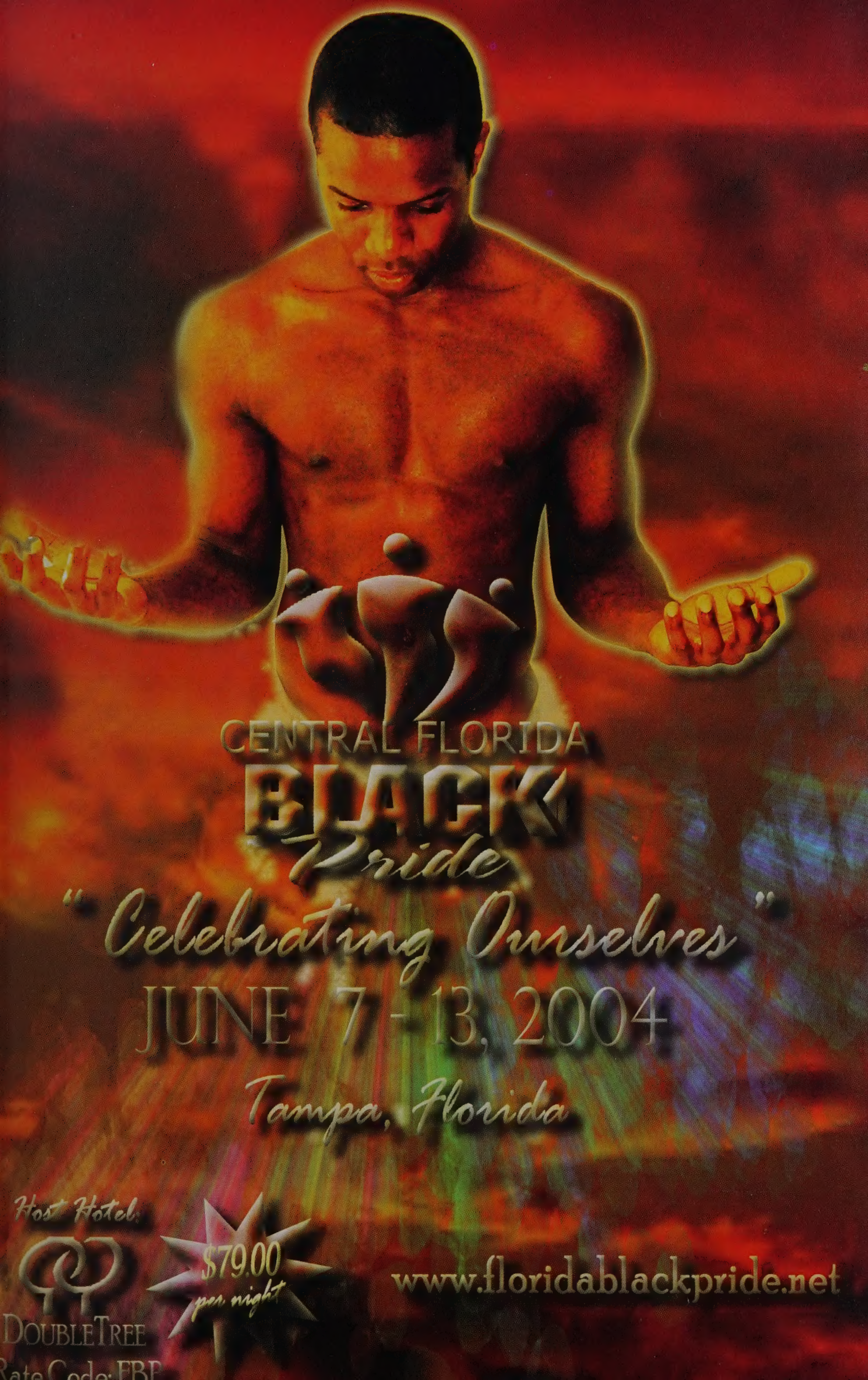

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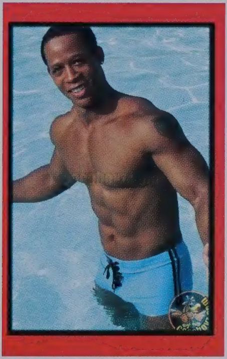

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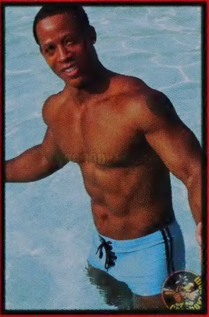

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IF YOU MEET OUR CRITERIA, YOU WILL BE INTERVIEWED FOR A POSSIBLE PHOTOSHOOT*.

WE WILL ALSO ASSIST IN SECURING ACCOMODATIONS FOR YOU WHILE YOU'RE IN MIAMI

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL OUR INFO LINE:
305-528-7495

Photo: Blackmen.net Design: www.flyernation.com

*All Photoshoots will be conducted in a private, secure location. You will be required to pose Nude for still photos and to do a jerk-off (solo) video; therefore, you must be at least 18 years of age to be considered and if selected you must provide two forms of ID to verify your identity and your age, including at least one government-issued photo ID.

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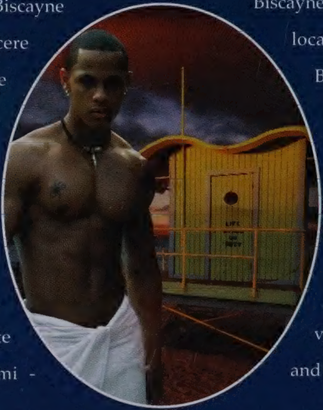

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